

The big story about Global Warming

John Gyorki

September 25th, 2008.

I recently did some research on alternative energy sources in order to find out how much progress we have made to date to ease the strain on our limited petroleum resources and reduce the gasses that cause global warming. Unfortunately, the results from these various sources did not appear to me to form a consensus. By the way, we all agree that we have limited petroleum resources and global warming, right?

Well, for a long time, I did not buy into the global warming scenario because I just never saw or read any scientific proof that we did have the problem. (Remember "Global Cooling" during the 1970's?) I read articles and reports written by people who got their information from other people, but no data, no solid proof, and no source material or reports based on scientific research and tests. It appears that most people who write about global warming draw conclusions from myriad isolated incidents and other unscientific sources which really do not reflect legitimate trends. Or they manipulate data to support their premise. Melting glaciers, drowning polar bears, flooding, tornados, hurricanes, and cyclones do not sound like convincing scientific evidence to me. Nor are these events extraordinary. The real overwhelming evidence is that they have been occurring for centuries! At least I have a modicum of personal experience; I have lived through more than 60 seasons in a row, and I have not noticed any significant changes in the weather during that time, other than random perturbations that I should expect from Mother Nature.

We common folks typically get most of our information about such things from a variety of readily available sources (not normally considered scientific), which include "popular-press" newspapers and magazines, radio, and television. Pay attention: Their reports are all based on fear. They rarely, if ever, cite credible reference documents for their source of information. It seems to me, what we see is an inverted pyramid built upon successive sources of misinformation. Then I read "Cool It – The Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming," by Bjorn Lomborg (2007), currently an adjunct professor at the Copenhagen Business School. Now here is one convincing story! He does admit that we are experiencing global warming, but not nearly on a scale that the popular press would like you to believe. And I think his solution is bizarre—it will give intelligent people a reason to pause. (Find it at www.lomborg.com.)

In Lomborg's book on global warming, he devotes half of it to reference sources. Almost every sentence he writes has a reference. In my opinion, the book is unprecedented. But I should have read his earlier book first, "The Skeptical Environmentalist – Measuring the Real State of the World," written when he was Associate Professor of Statistics, University of Aarhus, Denmark, published in 1998 and 2001. Here, he "is critical of the way in which environmental organizations make selective and misleading use of scientific evidence" in "measuring the real state of the world." This book lays a foundation for truth and ethics, and after you read it, you cannot help but suspect that something is terribly wrong with the way in which most "non-technical" people report and disseminate information and data.

AUTHORS:

John Gyorki (22)
 Larry Boulden (6)
 Leslie Langnau (6)
 Mike Emich (1)
 Scott McCafferty (2)

ABOUT US

ADVERTISE

SUBSCRIBE TO MAGAZINE



Subscribe in a reader



CATEGORIES

Insight
 Motion Control

SEARCH

ARCHIVES

February 2009
 January 2009
 December 2008
 November 2008
 October 2008
 September 2008
 August 2008
 July 2008
 June 2008
 May 2008
 April 2008
 March 2008

As a scientist or an engineer, you would not discover anything worthwhile, nor develop a new product or process if you used these misguided techniques for research and data reduction in your everyday work. You would forever be on a wild goose chase. Now, you owe it to yourself to study Lomborg's books. They will change your attitude about what you read and what you should believe. They did just that for me.

jgyorki@designworldonline.com

There are 13 Responses to "The big story about Global Warming"

#1 john garrett - 02 October, 5:03 PM

Dear Editor,

I have a similar story but with a different conclusion. About ten years ago I became uncomfortable getting my information on global warming from the environmental groups I support, so I started subscribing to primary scientific publications, journals like Nature and Science. In these journals, a typical article has a name like "light carbon isotope excursion preceding paleocene-eocene hyperthermal". The title is followed by an abstract that summarizes the article for easy reference. The articles then describe the data and methods used. Throughout, statements and assumptions have footnotes citing other publications, a list that sometimes is as long as the article itself. And last, any conclusions are carefully qualified as to what the authors can and cannot claim. For example, an article from 2001 citing a change in outgoing long wavelength radiation at wavelengths affected by CO₂, methane, CFC-11 and CFC-12 ended with the humble phrase "should further observations corroborate our findings, then this work is the first observational evidence of greenhouse warming...."

One shouldn't run out and declare proof after one article. Rather, one should continue reading to get other scientists' reactions. Others write in to critique or fine tune the methods. Follow up papers corroborate or refute. This paper trail is the science, and you are correct in that most people do not follow it. For example, I would be curious if anyone can show that the 70s global cooling was more than hyped popular media running off with a few legitimate papers in which the findings were not corroborated by further observations.

How science is retold should also be part of the big story. Based on a subgroup of scientific papers I've read specific to hurricanes and global warming, I can cite one of every three articles and I'd give you a set of references disproving the link between warming and hurricanes. Alternatively, I could cite a different third that would show a strong link. The question is in what the whole balance of the literature says. Its hard for us to survey the whole balance and to know when enough evidence is available.

Perhaps most alarming in my research was the number of scientist and the citation trails that appear to agree on 1) CO₂ from antropogenic emissions will change the climate; 2) the rate of change is unprecedented in the past million (and maybe longer) years 3) there is reason to believe there are abrupt tipping points that can move the climate into natural, stable, but less desirable modes, 4) the warming signal now is very noisy, 5) there is merit and a scientific obligation to detect this signal as early as possible. What is not known is how the hydrological cycle will react (more rain or less rain) and how the biosphere and oceans will react (positive feedbacks that release more CO₂ or feedbacks that help sequester), the extent of warming attributable to land-use change–

and there is much more.

I highly recommend that you learn to recognize and then sample the primary scientific literature. For most of us, scientific literacy is knowing how to recognize science, as we don't have the time, means, or skill to do our own research. If the primary literature is too much to take on before writing a column, consider this blog by real climatologists: <http://www.realclimate.org>

Thank you
John Garrett

#2 [designworld reader](#) - 07 October, 9:25 AM

John,
I just wanted to give you a thumbs-up on your global warming editorial. You mentioned the use of fear by the media. Have you read Michael Crichton book STATE OF FEAR? Also another book by Michael is AIRFRAME. Both books are fiction, but show the true character of environmentalist and the "news" media. Keep up the good work.

Paul Heinemann, Tooling Solutions

#3 [designworld reader](#) - 07 October, 9:25 AM

Dear John,

Your editorial in the September magazine was brilliant. Not because you finally figured it out, but that you understand that all the hype isn't based upon any real science. If you want some real science go to the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine and look at their Global Warming Petition Project. I also highly endorse getting a subscription to their newsletter - Access to Energy. Money well spent. For \$147 you will get a treasure trove of material that will both enlighten and entertain.

Warm regards,

Zot

Zot Barazzotto

#4 [designworld reader](#) - 07 October, 9:26 AM

Hi John.

Two quick points - Lomborg's degrees are in political science, not physics or engineering.

The principal argument about global warming is the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere - it is spiking to an all-time high. We can guess what it was in the past by taking core samples of ice in the Arctic. Obviously, if it gets too high, it will trap heat and warm the planet.

In any case, it seems prudent for humanity to not alter the atmosphere in any way. I mean, why take a chance?

Cheers,
Jim Lynch

#5 [designworld reader](#) - 07 October, 9:26 AM

Just read over the Oct 26 Capitol Update and never cease to be amazed at the ways our Government finds to waste tax dollars.

The USA could be energy self-sufficient if Congress would allow drilling in the USA! Our fuel prices wouldn't be tied to the Commodities Market if Congress allowed the USA to be energy self-sufficient (70%)! The USA wouldn't have to import a million gallons of gasoline per day if Congress would allow new refining facilities that expel CO2!

It is really not a matter of petroleum (or coal) shortage, but reliance on the ridiculous scientific hypothesis that CO2 causes global warming...

Science is the quest for knowledge; Engineering is the application of science.

Scientists hypothesize things like CO2-caused global warming all the time, then we Engineers have to reconcile the realities. We are still awaiting the scientific proof that CO2 has anything to do with global warming. I believe that it's a governmental grab for taxes from all humans in industrialized societies around the world. See previous Email, below:

By coring earth's history from the ocean bottoms, we know that the earth has experienced a global warming period about every 90,000 years, that lasts about 10,000 years. We are nearing the end of a global warming period, where the temperatures are their warmest. Soon, we will be in for another 90,000 years of global norm, about 20 DEGF average cooler. Refer to the National Geographic article, pp 64-65, September 2004.

Does global warming exist? Yes, it has for the last 10,000 years, and it has before at intervals of 90,000 years.

Did the miniscule increase in CO2, ~264 to ~385 ppm this century, have any effect? Unlikely! The earth's weather is about 90% a result of the sun's activities (variation of earth's elliptical orbit about sun) and about 10% a result of the oceans activities. Also, the average historical variation, every decade or so, could easily account for the current heat trend.

Was the CO2 increase caused by mankind? A good guess, but with natural earth releases and ocean absorption, we can only guess at the causes. My guess is that this positive imbalance is a result of 10,000 years of natural global warming.

If we capture CO2 from power production, should we store it for release when global cooling sets in for another 90,000 years? All power expenses will be increased for this burden. We do this for gasoline, where the price is the same in all states (say \$1.65/gal), but the taxes increase this to \$2.50 - \$3.00 /gal. It seems that CO2 reduction/disposal is just another grab for taxes. If the power plants must report/control N2O, SO2, CO2 and other emissions, why not make them eliminate the CO2 and just add the cost onto every household power bill? However, industry is apparently turning to government funding now, to remove carbon and CO2 from the environment. The cost will just be passed on the the

consumer.

Then we can eliminate carbonated drinks (4 million/week). But the CO2 Greenies will say, no, you took it from the environment (wells) and so releasing it is a net zero. GREAT! Now we can burn coal from the environment to make power and just give the CO2 back. Is CO2 capture and storage worth the investment? Not until science can demonstrate cause and effect of CO2 on the (1) global warming trend, as well as the (2) ability of ~385 ppm CO2 to trap heat from the sun. Perhaps this has become a political event because, when global cooling finally arrives, the politicos can take the credit for success.

In simple summary, what single event can do the most to offset the future effects of Global Warming and Global Cooling? Prepare coastal facilities and homes for more severe storms and flooding damage, and nuclear power for more significant (efficient), long term electrical heating...Buddy

C.A. "Buddy" Bollfrass, P.E.

#6 designworld reader - 07 October, 9:35 AM

Thank You Thank You Thank You,

I have never believed in the hype about man made global warming. I just don't understand why such falsehoods are believed by the masses.

I just wanted to say thank you for your article and exposing the truth.

Thank You,

Nelson Long

#7 designworld reader - 07 October, 9:35 AM

Mr. Gyorki,

Sir, I read your article titled "The big story about global warming". My only comment to you would be this "is it really so bad to do good things?" I am skeptical by nature and tend to "think for myself" and a book alone couldn't persuade me in either direction. My wife and I like to save money by doing simple things like conserve water, turn off lights when we really don't need them and things of that sort. Not that "Oh my, the sky is falling" reaction. When we hear "bickering" we tend to turn away and when we read magazines when views of "ones views" that magazine goes directly into the recycle bin.

Regards,

Dave Zanoni

#8 john garrett - 10 October, 4:53 PM

A good place to start when examining the motives and validity of figures like Bjorn Lomborg and the Oregon Institute of Science and Medicine would be in Source Watch (www.sourcewatch.org). Following John Gyorki's suggestion to judge reporting on the quality of its references, you'll find references to

accusations of scientific dishonesty against Lomborg and to a misleading petition by the OISM. Better, the references are hyperlinked for easy access via the web.

Another commenter points out the role of Milankovitch cycles in driving Earth's climate yet doesn't see a contradiction in also claiming that science fails to identify the source of the rise in atmospheric CO₂. The Milankovitch cycles (Earth's precession and variations in tilt and orbital eccentricity) are to climatology what plate tectonics are to geology. Calculation of these variations are not in dispute, nor is the signature of these variations in climate records obtained from ocean sediments and ice cores. By analyzing the ratios of oxygen-16 to oxygen-18, scientists infer ocean temperatures. However, global distribution of glacial ice also affects this ratio, so scientists use ratios of calcium to magnesium to separate the signal due to ocean temperature from that due to the distribution of continental ice. (That said, major climate events are not fully explained by Milankovitch cycles alone. Current thought identifies atmospheric CO₂ levels as a key factor in accentuating and moderating orbital-driven climate change.) So if one accepts that marine sediments reflect climate changes due to variations in earth's orbit, then one accepts the isotope analysis and global climate modelling used to determine the volume of water in the oceans. Given this, it's a simpler task to analyze the ratio of carbon-12 to carbon-13, compare it to ambient CO₂ and CO₂ in ice cores and C in tree rings and see that since the industrial revolution the ratio of Carbon-12 to Carbon-13 has been moving rapidly toward that found in fossil fuels.

#9 Design World Reader - 22 October, 3:11 PM

Sent: Thursday, October 09, 2008 7:01 PM

Subject: Global Warming

The editor of a major engineering magazine should be better informed, here is a good start for real peer reviewed science: <http://www.google.com/search?q=Scripps+global+warming&>

There is no peer reviewed science that disputes global warming and the Keeling curve—wise up.

– A Reader

#10 Design World Editor - 22 October, 3:11 PM

Reader:

What kind of cars did they drive 55 million years ago?

Best regards,

John

#11 Design World Reader - 22 October, 3:12 PM

John,

Please, peer reviewed science—the rest is crap. At least you don't think the world is 6000 years old, therefore you should have no trouble understanding a problem that is 100 years old and has no relevance to the atmosphere of the

Eocene.
Yours truly,
Reader

#12 [Design World Editor](#) - 22 October, 3:13 PM

Hi Reader,
Right on! Great reply. I agree with you, we need to study peer-reviewed material. After all, as technologists, what else can we truly rely on?

But even at that, I am often skeptical. As you probably know, analyzing data is not always easy and the results can be misleading, even when done by honest fellows.

We may have global warming, but I don't think it is totally caused by humans, and not to the extent that the popular press would like us to believe. I think Mother nature is just "doing her thing," and could care less about us. But if She is aware of us, at best, She has to keep putting bandages on the "perturbations" we cause.

Best regards,
John

#13 B. Gruschenko - 30 October, 6:59 AM

Thank you Mr. Gyorki for this brave article. The fact is that most of the people get their information about global warming from the media, where generally no one feels obliged to reference their scientific sources. I have been surprised by news being broadcasted by such prestigious media like the BBC making affirmations about the descending levels of rainfall in the mediterranean area due to climate change or how global warming is responsible for the last drought in southern Africa, all of them without citing a single research work or scientist, or a graph based on historical rainfall records in order to back them.

Leave a Comment

If this is your first comment it may be held for moderation. You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS feed](#), or [Trackback](#) from your own site.

Username (required)
 Email (required)
 Web Site

Submit

Copyright 2007 DesignWorldonline.com