



Climate Delay

Climate Change Denial

As much as 50 years ago the big oil companies (like Shell and BP) knew from their own scientific reports that burning fossil fuels was heating the planet. They then spent decades trying to suppress that information and to convince everyone that climate change was not real, so they could continue to make huge profits. Nowadays hardly anyone still believes that climate change is not real, or is not caused by human activity - even the oil companies now admit it. If you're still not convinced, have a look at

<https://skepticalscience.com/argument.php> where the most common denial arguments are addressed.

Climate Delay

Far from winding down their activities and rapidly transitioning to renewable energy, the oil companies are now spending millions of dollars a year on trying to delay action on climate change.



12 discourses

They invest in think tanks, tame scientists, politicians and front organisations to muddy the waters and spread confusion, to steer everyone away from the simple fact that to stop climate change and secure a liveable future we have to stop burning their product.

Researchers at the University of Cambridge have broken down these tactics into 12 "discourses of climate delay" and you can see examples of them every day on television, on social media, in the newspapers and from the mouths of politicians. Some of the people passing on this fossil fuel propaganda are probably being paid directly or indirectly by the oil companies but for many others there is something more subtle going on.

Cognitive Dissonance

The existential risk posed by climate and nature breakdown is something we, as humans, rightly fear. But many of us also fear the lifestyle changes that might be necessitated by tackling the problem, and even if we don't, the changes we need to make are often outside our control because the societal infrastructure is not in place.

For example, we know driving a car adds to the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere but there is no attractive alternative in place for most people as the public transport infrastructure is not convenient or cheap enough.

When we feel these two contradictory fears, and can see no easy solution to the problem, we experience cognitive dissonance; our minds downplay the seriousness of the problem, or deny it completely.

That's why the "discourses of climate delay" are so appealing to many of us - they give our minds a way of dodging this difficult dilemma, even in the face of common sense and scientific fact.



My desire to be well-informed is currently at odds with my desire to remain sane.

Ask us for our 12 "climate delay cards" which explain and answer each of the different forms of delay.