

## **The Blindspot Declaration: a call to action on technology blindness concerning sustainability**

**Claim** Conditions on the planet continue to deteriorate as a result of human actions. There is a blindness to technologies that is central to the problem. In many ways, sustainability discourse fails to overcome technology blindness. Education that perpetuates technology blindness is no longer defensible.

**The state of play** Humans have used technologies throughout their existence. The human-technology relationship is key to the sustainability of all species. Humans hold a fundamental responsibility towards all of nature. An absence of holistic and critical perspectives on the interplay of technologies and sustainability is perpetuated by current educational models.

**Technologies** may be products, processes or systems and they exist as the result of human intentions and actions, that is, by design. They can assume different roles in various situations and they embody multiple, often competing, values. They are neither ahistorical nor apolitical and articulate powers that are often undemocratically distributed. Technologies are never neutral and they can be overtly present or seemingly invisible in their existence. Deep understandings of technologies are intrinsic to critiques of ecological perception, economy, sustainability and potential post-human conditions. Despite all these circumstances, technologies remain largely understood in only superficial ways and lack critical-ethical interrogation.

**Sustainability** is a necessary response to many challenges; some of which are existential. It resists simple categorization but is often viewed positively through hope and strategic optimism towards the future or negatively via pessimism and apathy. It is dynamic and shapeshifting, requiring contextual awareness and sensitivity. The transition to more desirable futures presents technological, political and ethical challenges. Sustainability is ethically defensible yet it remains weakened by the absence of critical technological discourse.

**Education**, formal and informal, is a political act which has the responsibility to better the living world. While technology education currently fails properly to address sustainability, education for sustainability currently fails properly to address technologies. In turn, these are major shortcomings of general education. Matters of complexity, holism, emotions, values and ethics all call for attention when educating about technologies and sustainability.

### **Call to action**

In order to better address technology blindness we, currently a group of academics in Europe, call for research-informed, responsible and responsive technology-sustainability education that:

1. recognises that many sustainability challenges are technology challenges;
2. articulates expansive understandings of technologies in sustainability education;
3. is inter-disciplinary and trans-boundary in bringing technology education and sustainability education into play across curricula;
4. foregrounds transformative ethical-critical pedagogies and literacies to deepen knowledge and understanding about technologies-sustainability relationships;
5. embraces imagination, holistic thinking and systems thinking;
6. addresses risk, uncertainty and ambiguity through ethically-framed precautionary, long-term and reflective thinking;
7. acknowledges humility and educates for constructive hope and emotional resilience;
8. is contextually grounded, culturally aware and action-oriented;
9. informs policy making that does not shy away from discussing ethics, values and moral dilemmas;
10. itself models principles of sustainability.

We seek to broaden a network of critical, creative and concerned individuals from multiple backgrounds to develop fresh perspectives and knowledges for deeper understandings of technology blindness issues.

### **The Blindspot Group**

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