

World mayors get software to track carbon imprint

Steve Lohr

A new Internet tool to help individuals and communities curb their roles in adding global-warming carbon emissions was to be announced on Tuesday at a conference in New York of mayors from around the world, said a person who built the Web technology.

Many environmental groups offer simple carbon calculators on the Web, which allow people to figure the carbon dioxide production from daily routines like driving a car or lighting a house.

"But this is serious software, serious quantitative methods and social networking technology brought to the green world," said Ron Dembo, the chief executive of Zerofootprint, a nonprofit group that provides information and services to combat global warming.

Dembo, a founder of an analytics software company and a former computer scientist at Yale University, said details of the Web service would be described Tuesday at the C40 Large Cities Climate Summit by David Miller, the mayor of Toronto.

The Web service, called GoZero Footprint City Calculator, is a collaboration of Zerofootprint and Business Objects, a maker of business intelligence software. Bernard Liautaud, the chairman of Business Objects, said that his company had joined the project as an initial step in using its software to help people on the Web create a "collective intelligence" to address humanitarian issues.

On the interactive climate site, people will be able to enter data, see the carbon effect and note how their carbon footprint compares with averages in their city and in cities worldwide. They will also be able to do what-if simulations to see how changes in their activities affect carbon emissions. The anonymous data will be collected for analysis by climate change scientists and others.

A link to the new site, Dembo said, will be at the "initiatives" section of Zerofootprint.net.

"The idea," he said, "is something that will address millions of people and is infinitely customizable to any culture or lifestyle."

The top-down global warming policies of governments, Dembo said, like creating environmental regulations and product standards, are important.

"But bottom-up is where we're really going to make progress," he said, "and this is a tool that can potentially enable a really massive carbon footprint reduction."

The mayors' session is a four-day gathering that began Monday with Michael Bloomberg of New York as its host. It is partly sponsored by the Clinton Climate Initiative, a project led by former President Bill Clinton.

This is the second mayors' climate summit meeting; the first took place two years ago in London. Cities, according to the organizers, are responsible for three-quarters of the world's energy consumption and have "a critical role to play in the reduction of carbon emissions and the reversal of dangerous climate change."

Disponível em: <<http://www.iht.com>>. Acesso em 15/5/2007.