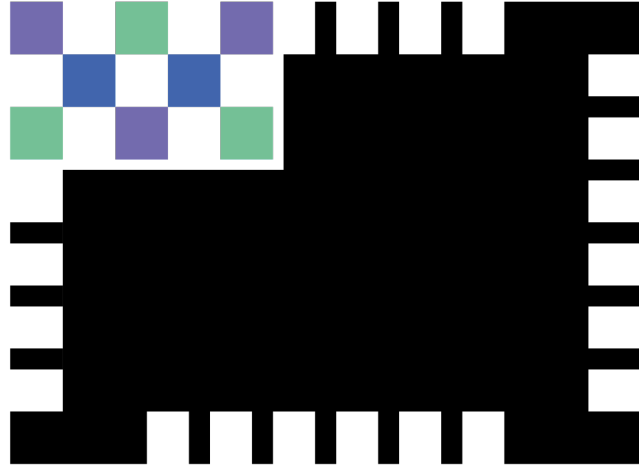**the Networked Condition**

Environmental Impacts
of Digital Cultural Production

**FAST FAMILIAR, ABANDON NORMAL DEVICES & ARTS CATALYST LAUNCH DIGITAL
CARBON CALCULATOR FOR ARTS PRODUCERS**
16 September 2021

Arts organisations: Fast Familiar, Abandon Normal Devices (AND) and Arts Catalyst are
pleased to publish collaborative research-led project The Networked Condition, which explores
the often-hidden environmental impact of the creation and delivery of artworks using digital
technology. The project features a series of case studies about digital arts production
internationally, as well as a newly commissioned, free-to-use carbon calculator, to help artists
and arts producers understand and reduce the impact of digital production.

For the past 18 months, the partner organisations have explored digital arts through an
environmental lens, as part of The Accelerator Programme (led by Julie's Bicycle and Arts
Council England), which works with organisations to advance sustainable practices and share
insights with the wider sector. This collaboration has allowed Fast Familiar, AND and Arts
Catalyst to frame questions, test ideas and explore potential solutions to inform industry
practices and processes for artists, creative producers and commissioners.

Recent years have seen an explosion in the use of digital technology in the creation and
dissemination of artworks, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The associated carbon
footprint of these works is more hidden than in traditional artforms, often occurring in remote
server farms or obscured by complex global supply chains and distribution networks which
further exacerbate the disparity in environmental damage inflicted on the Global South
compared to the Global North. The ecological and ethical costs involved in the extraction of

materials, manufacturing processes and designed obsolescence of digital technologies can be huge.

By speaking with artists, researchers and organisations, the project has produced a series of case studies, providing useful insights to help make these hidden impacts more tangible. Mapping aspects of and approaches to the creation, manufacture, distribution and disposal involved in digital cultural production, the case studies provide a window into creative practices which critically engage with the social, ethical and environmental implications of digital production cycles - as well as the vast and often invisible infrastructures of which they are a part. The first four case studies, published today, feature conversations with artist and researcher Joana Moll; academic, researcher and artist Vladan Joler; cross-disciplinary studio Invisible Flock; and digital artist Kyle McDonald.

Alongside this research, a newly commissioned carbon calculator is the first in a series of practical tools to help artists and commissioners working in the fields of digital art and creative media to better understand the carbon footprint and other impacts of the generation and distribution of their artworks, and to help them plan projects in a more sustainable way. The tool has been built by computational artist Armando Gonzalez Sosto with support from London South Bank University's Centre for the Study of the Networked Image. The tool is a prototype that the partners hope to continue to improve and develop, if funding is available.

The tool can be accessed for free at https://thenetworkedcondition.com and includes links to simple guidance on the practical steps producers can take to reduce that footprint.

The project launches on Thursday 16 September with a demonstration and discussion as part of the AMA's London Regional Meeting. Fast Familiar will present the project and the Digital Arts Carbon Calculator to arts marketing professionals, within a workshop on Sustainable Marketing.

"As organisations, digital devices, technology and media are central to the work we do, and this, combined with the urgent need to address issues of sustainability within all areas of our work, means that exploring these often hidden environmental costs is an essential part of the way we work and what we produce" says Dan Barnard, Fast Familiar

Becky Hazlewood, Environmental Sustainability Project Manager at Julie's Bicycle says:
"We're delighted to be supporting this project as part of The Julie's Bicycle and Arts Council England Accelerator Programme. Every 18 months we mentor, train and support up to 10 organisations to achieve sustainable goals, and we believe The Networked Condition will have an immediate and lasting impact on sector understanding and action."

Further case studies will be published in the coming months, including interviews with artist, experimental filmmaker, musician and computer scientist Memo Akten; and artists Jean Katambayi Mukendi and Maarten Vanden Eynde, who initiated transnational research project On-Trade-Off which explores a broad range of questions surrounding raw materials for technological industries, financial speculation, and the history of electricity. There are also blogs

on Fast Familiar's website about how they made their [website use 50% less energy](#) and the process they went on to create their [first carbon-neutral project](#).

Insights and learning from the project will continue to be shared with the wider cultural sector, helping to inform sectoral change through encouraging more responsible, sustainable and creative uses of digital technology. The tools and resources developed through the project will support critical decision-making in the early planning stages of any project, as well as contributing to and advocating for sustainable practice within the creative community.

The Networked Condition is a collaboration between Fast Familiar, Abandon Normal Devices and Arts Catalyst, part of Julie's Bicycle Accelerator Programme, supported by Arts Council England.

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For press enquiries relating to The Networked Condition please contact:
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// Notes to Editors

About Fast Familiar
Digital studio **Fast Familiar** creates relational artworks which bring groups together for transformative encounters with society's most pressing questions. They are an interdisciplinary collaboration comprising expertise in narrative design, facilitation and creative computing. They make artworks which are participatory, playful and political, and use digital technology to enable new forms of human connection in a rapidly changing world. For Fast Familiar, art is a space to explore questions which are too complex for daily life - and where we can rehearse better outcomes for a world where no decision of significance is taken by an isolated individual.

Fast Familiar's artwork *The Justice Syndicate* has received numerous five star reviews, was selected for the Aesthetica Art Prize Anthology and longlisted for the Lumen Prize. Their interactive whistleblower thriller Smoking Gun was picked by the Financial Times as one of the top ten arts experiences of lockdown. The New York Times described Fast Familiar's immersive courtroom drama The Evidence Chamber as 'relentless innovation, a glimpse of the future of online performance.'

About AND
Abandon Normal Devices (AND) is a nomadic commissioner and born-digital producer, a catalyst for new approaches to art-making and digital invention. We create ground breaking projects which challenge the definitions of art and moving image with a distinct emphasis on creative enquiry and provocations.

AND brings together an eclectic mix of academics, filmmakers, scientists and anarchists to actively push the boundaries of audience experience and arts production. Inviting artists to hijack the imagination, by developing projects which abandon traditional settings and partnerships.

Proposing a significant shift in the way art is experienced, the AND portfolio consists of site-specific film happenings, exhibitions, performances, online projects, residencies, public realm interventions and a roaming biennial festival. Audiences are invited to interact with bold ideas, encounter new art-forms and experience art, in the everyday and in unexpected locations.

About Arts Catalyst
Arts Catalyst is a visual arts organisation based in Sheffield, South Yorkshire. Informed by the spirit of inquiry, Arts Catalyst's programme is grounded in transdisciplinary research and socially-engaged projects that critically explore our changing world.

The organisation commissions artist projects, hosts residencies and produces public programmes, as well as organising walks, performances, workshops, radio broadcasts, communal meals and other actions that bring people together. They regularly work in collaboration with community, third sector and academic partner organisations in the fields of art, science and the humanities across the UK and beyond.

Since 1994, Arts Catalyst has commissioned more than 170 artists' projects, including major new works by the Otolith Group, Agnes Meyer Brandis, Tomás Saraceno, Aleksandra Mir, Larry Achiampong and David Blandy, and Susan Schuppli.

About Julie's Bicycle
Julie's Bicycle is a pioneering not-for-profit, mobilising the arts and culture to take action on the climate and ecological crisis. Founded by the music industry in 2007 and now working across the arts and culture, JB has partnered with over 2000 organisations in the UK and internationally. Combining cultural and environmental expertise, Julie's Bicycle focuses on high-impact programmes and policy change to meet the climate crisis head-on.

Accelerator is a strand of work to foster enterprise, innovation, future thinking and creative perspectives on climate and the environment; looking at everything from touring models and audience engagement to design and supply chains, income generation and governance.