Kaspersky Lab Invites Users to Reflect on How our Digital Footprint May Shape the Future





According to environmentalists' predictions on the company's Earth 2050 portal, the increase of E-Waste will contribute to the Earth's Green House effect

Kaspersky Lab's interactive multimedia project Earth 2050 has been accumulating predictions about environmental, social and technological developments for the upcoming 30 years since its launch in 2017. As Earth Day approaches, the company is inviting users from around the world to think about the future and contribute their thoughts to questions such as: If cars will be automated, how can we ensure passenger safety? How will our digital footprint impact global temperatures? Will machines take over the world?

This Earth Day, Kaspersky Lab is extending an invitation to all users, researchers and futurologists to contribute their environmental, technological and social predictions to the Earth 2050 site. The portal, which is divided in three time categories- 2030, 2040 and 2050- can help users shape their 'vision of the future' by exploring the more than 200 predictions already online and contributing their own thoughts to the site.

It is no longer a prediction, it's a reality

According to the "Global E-Waste Monitor 2017", distributed by United Nation's University, the International Telecommunications Union, and the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA), the volume of garbage created by e-waste has increased due to the inappropriate disposal of electronic devices. To put in perspective, 44.7 million tons of electronic waste was generated in 2016, an 8% increase when compared to 2014. In addition, experts predict a 17% increase in e-waste for 2021, or 52.2 million tons.

The inappropriate treatment of e-waste could cause air contamination to worsen and contribute to the Green House effect, causing global temperatures to oscillate. For Carla Martins, a Professor of Environmental Law from Brazil, if we don't change the way we dispose of garbage, in general, and e-waste, temperatures will continue to rise, and by 2050, the average global temperature will be between 2 and 3 degrees higher than the record highs being registered today. The most concerning part, according to Martins, is that regions with glaciers will diminish due to the increase in temperature. "We will also see catastrophic floods in coastal areas, as well as significant losses in the biodiversity and even the extinction of several species, especially those in tropical zones. We will also encounter lower levels of fresh water," she added.

Help improve the world's reality

According to Fabio Assolini, senior analyst for Kaspersky Lab, "when a device is not properly disposed or recycled, it could contaminate the environment and potentially, all living things. The residuals of e-waste that make contact with the ground could contaminate the water and cause chronic illnesses, and even prove poisonous; thus it is important to find specialized recycling centers to prevent the increase of e-waste."

In observance of Earth Day, Kaspersky Lab offers the following tips to take into account before recycling electronic devices:

• Store your data safely: Modern iOS and Android devices tend to sync with cloud automatically, so your contacts, photos and other data are most probably saved in your Google/Apple account. But you'd better check it by browsing through your new device, making sure everything is present.
• Erase your digital footprint: In addition to eliminating the files and personal folders on your PC, it is also imperative to erase your favorites, stored passwords, cookies and history on your web browser, as well as e-mail and instant messaging applications such as Outlook, Skype and the like.
• Remove SIM cards: Anything that has data on it and can be physically removed from the phone should be removed before tossing the phone away.
• Erase properly: It is not enough to place all of the documents in the recycle bin of your PC and press the "Empty recycle bin" button to permanently delete all the files. It is recommended to use a trusted tool designed for the permanent removal of this information, such as the "Shredder" tool that is included in Kaspersky Total Security multi-device.
• Restore your device to factory settings: The instruction manual of your device will detail how to perform this step. Remember, you must select all options to delete information (including stored files) and confirm. You can also use a security application, such as Kaspersky Internet Security for Android, which includes a feature for wiping data. This app is also capable of remotely wiping personal data from a phone, in case you happen to lose it.

Contribute your vision

Earth 2050 contains predictions for 80 cities around the globe. Users can select any of these cities and forecasts will appear at the top of the map for places such as Manaus, Barcelona and Shanghai, allowing them to take a 360º look at how future cities might be operating within a few years. Users can also contribute predictions on environmental, technological or social advances, such as: Will the pollution in the oceans increase? Could we lead a full life without the need of leaving our homes? Will we see the end of traditional television?

In reference to technology, Martins believes that by 2040 the world will see notable advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI). "One of the greatest concerns is how we will maintain total control over machines and create international regulations based on digital ethics," she said.

By completing a special feedback form visitors can add their own ideas to the portal. Users can discuss existing predictions and also contribute by sharing their own. To read the predictions already included on the site and contribute your ideas to the project, visit: https://2050.earth/.

For information on how to properly recycle your digital devices, visit: https://latam.kaspersky.com/blog/contribuye-digitalmente-al-dia-de-la-tierra/2915/