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LIFE GUIDE

Go green with the Internet's help

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High-tech. Eco-friendly. Many of us in Austin want to fall into both camps. With Earth Day coming up April 22, we'll be taking a look at the topic in this column and future ones. This week, learn about some ways the Internet can help you be greener.

Business

According to a study last year by the Consumer Electronics Association, the estimated 3.9 million telecommuters in the United States saved 840 million gallons of gasoline. Here are some of the many sites and services that make it easier to work from home or cut down on business travel.

Austin company LifeSize makes products that enable high-definition video conferencing (lifesize.com). SightSpeed is a Web-based application for video meet-ups (sightspeed.com).

The services at WebEx and Citrix include online meetings and remote computer access (webex.com, citrixonline.com).

Microsoft's SharePoint creates online collaboration sites (www.sharepoint360.com).

The MyFax service lets you send and receive faxes through e-mail (myfax.com).

Yugma lets you collaborate in real time on a variety of applications (yugma.com).

VAPPS and Iotum are conference-call services (vapps.com, iotum.com).

Many online to-do list applications allow you to share your lists, calendars and other materials with additional users. Some to try: Hiveminder (hiveminder.com), Backpack (backpackit.com) and Highrise

(highrisehq.com).

What does the future of online business collaboration look like? Jennifer Schlegal, who moderated the session "10 Ways to Green-ify Your Digital Life" at the South by Southwest Interactive Festival last month, predicts we'll see more businesses having their gatherings in virtual worlds, such as Second Life. Schlegal is director of event strategies for TechSoup's NetSquared initiative.

Personal

The Carpool application by Zimride for Facebook makes it easier to share rides. Log into the site and search for "carpool."

Keep track of how you're doing environmentally at Carbon Minder (<http://apps.facebook.com/carbonminder/about.php>), carbon

footprint.com and co2stats.com (for your Web site). (We found out about these two sites and the Facebook application at Schlegal's SXSW session.)

On carbonrally.com, you can take on "challenges" such as cutting back on idling your car, see the impact of your actions and compare your results with other individuals or teams.

At payitgreen.org, a calculator shows the environmental impact of switching to online bill paying.

Information

Of course, the Web has endless sources of environmental information. Here are a few to try:

"Mainstream Green" (mainstreamgreen.tv) is an Austin-produced Web show on Earth-friendly ideas.

Ideal Bite (idealbite.com) offers daily "bite-sized" tips on green living.

The Daily Green (the dailygreen.com) is a consumer-oriented site with lots of tips.

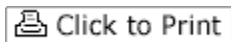
Worldchanging (world [changing.com](http://worldchanging.com)) is an online magazine about building a better future.

Treehugger (treehugger.com) offers green news and ideas with a "modern aesthetic."

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