

Picture this: You wake up every morning struggling to breathe from the thick smog and toxins in the air. The once bright sun is now reduced to a distant smudge on the horizon. The sky seems to have a permanent tinge of gray to it, thanks to the burning wildfires everywhere. These fires, along with global warming, have made everything smolder. People *buy* clean air for the luxury of fresh oxygen. It gets so out of hand that seeing people with oxygen cylinders strapped to their back becomes normalized.

It appears the planet only has two climates: hot and hotter, especially near the equator. People hurriedly move towards the poles in search of suitable living conditions, where they are greeted with mass migration and overcrowding. The hot and dry weather makes sure that crops to fail year after year. With so many mouths to feed, and so little food, people become desperate.

Worst of all, water becomes sparser than sparse. I mean, one of the main things that all living organisms need to survive, and it's just... gone?

Well, good thing that could never happen, right?

*Right?*

Unfortunately, this is not a sci-fi novel. The future I just described may very well be the one that humanity is spiraling into. We cannot wait for the sky to turn gray; action must be taken before things get worse. But to stop this decent, we must realize: what is *really* harming our planet? Also, please keep in mind that what I have described happens to be an extreme version of what we might face (although they should be taken seriously).

Anyway, water is one of the main things that all living organisms need to survive. If our water source is depleted, life cannot sustain for long. And a high consumer of our limited water sources would be AI data centers. Here's what really goes behind the scenes (or "screens"). As we all know, servers at data centers need energy to work, and when they consume this energy, it all turns into heat. To make sure that nothing gets overheated, data centers use water and fans to cool things down. An average medium sized data center can use up to 110 million gallons a year for cooling purposes, states the article, *Data Centers and Water Consumption*. The report also states, "According to scientists at the University of California, Riverside, each 100-word AI prompt is estimated to use roughly one bottle of water." To put this into perspective, using AI to draft a standard 500-word essay basically pours out 5 bottles of water. It turns out that the very thing that makes us 'advanced' might just be using up our water sources, one word at a time.

Another crucial factor contributing to our dystopian future scenario? Global warming and climate change. At this point, everybody has probably heard about it and has been sounding the alarm bells.

For one, NASA claims that sea levels will rise, weather will become more extreme (longer periods of drought, heat waves, and severe hurricanes), wildfire season will also be prolonged, global temperatures will continue to rise, and that local rainfall patterns will change. Other problems could also include negative impacts on agriculture (due to limited water, droughts, and heat), Health concerns (extreme weather), and more.

To quote scientist James Hansen, "Global warming isn't a prediction. It is happening." And the consequences are truly catastrophic.

Now, you might be asking yourself, "Well, I know all of this information...what do I do with it?" Chances are that you probably don't have any fancy technology or might not even know much about environmental change. But there are *some* things that you can do.

- First and foremost: *Spread awareness*. As Nathaniel Branden once said, "The first step toward change is awareness."
- Plant. More. Trees! Trees can give us oxygen to breathe and counteract our carbon footprints. Carbon footprints are the harmful gasses released into the atmosphere from human activities. And like it or not, everybody has one. The best way to counteract this effect is to plant more trees, which intake carbon dioxide (one of those "harmful gases") and replenish oxygen.
- Use less water! In fact, humans can only easily access about 1% of the world's water sources, so every drop matters.

Anyway, those are just a few suggestions to make a difference. But if everyone can do these things to some extent, we can help protect our planet for generations to come.

If everyone contributes to 'going green,' then the planet might never stop blooming.