



SMALL STEPS TO GREENER HABITS

Website's Monthly Challenge eases the path to eco-friendly lifestyle



Tomorrow is Earth Day. I wanted to find some apps or websites that people could use in their daily lives to make a positive impact on our planet.

There are many, many apps and sites devoted to this cause. You can measure your ecological footprint, energy audit your home, track the global impact on products you buy, virtually plant trees and determine how much carbon your overseas business meetings produce.

These are all good things, of course, but some of them are just one-time endeavors, others don't apply to a lot of people, and a few of them require more effort than many people are willing to give.

Some of the apps I looked at only had metric measurements, or you had to gather old utility bills and enter lots of data to get accurate answers. Many of the websites are full of doom and gloom scenarios that make you feel hopeless.

Common-sense approach

I commend the people who are committed enough to put in the time and effort to research their actual impact, and then do something about it. Most people would like to live more Earth-friendly lives, but they're so busy and overwhelmed with information, they don't know where to begin. **CampaignEarth.org** is a website with an approach that should appeal to a lot of people.

The tagline under the site's logo is

More Earth Day coverage. **C6**

"Providing the path for a sustainable future, one step at a time." This describes Campaign Earth's primary tool for saving the world, the Monthly Challenge.

Register to take the challenge and you will be emailed a new environmental goal every 30 days. The challenges start out simple but become progressively more involved as you continue with the program. The idea is that anyone can implement a small change to his or her lifestyle over the course of a month. Once that initial change becomes habit, a person can begin to incorporate another change. Instead of trying to radically alter your life in order to become a better global citizen, you take baby steps and gradually morph into one.

Think positively

Campaign Earth presents the challenges facing our world in a positive, optimistic way. Rather than scare people into inaction with dire predictions and sad stories, the site celebrates people's successes and illustrates how even small steps can have a positive effect.

The site contains lots of facts and figures to define the problem and acknowledges the difficulty most people have just trying to get by in their lives without worrying about saving the world at the same time. The strategy of small steps and positive reinforcement makes more sense than the apocalyptic shock and awe employed by some other sites.

Though the Monthly Challenge is Campaign Earth's main feature, there are a few other sections on the

site designed to encourage people to go green. There are profiles of site users that describe the steps they have taken to shrink their footprints. These range from a business owner who subsidizes his employees' use of public transportation and reduced his building's electricity use by 40 percent, to a young musician who recycles all his beer bottles.

Businesses can partner with Campaign Earth by incorporating the Challenge on websites or packaging, or they can donate financial support to the cause. The site also has a guide for people who want to purchase renewable energy, generated by such sources as wind or solar, for their homes or businesses.

A good start

Campaign Earth's site promotes a worthy cause in a positive way. The pages are bright and clean with friendly images and encouraging language. The navigation is logical and intuitive. The Monthly Challenge is a good idea and reason enough for the website to exist.

All of the things the site is doing right leave me wanting more out of it. It's a little light in content and would benefit by going deeper into some of the issues it raises. For instance, the green energy guide's list of utilities offering renewable power is short and geographically limited. A list of links to other online resources and a newsfeed of environmental stories would be welcome additions.

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