Science Podcast Research Reflection

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Introduction

In recent years, the topic of climate change has been pushed into the limelight, as its effects are being felt and seen by people around the world. Harsher weather, changing landscapes, and dirtier ecosystems are plaguing our planet, all due to human negligence. However, it isn’t just the humans on this Earth that are being affected. Billions of other lifeforms that share this planet with us are suffering as a result of our actions, and the clock is ticking towards the point of no return for humans and thousands of other species that will not be able to adapt fast enough.

To discuss this pressing issue, we used a podcast format to get multiple perspectives and narratives. Podcasts are a medium in which one or multiple people discuss a topic, and distribute the audio to the general public for listening. During the podcast, we included multiple quotations as well as supplemental audio clips. Because podcasts have long segments of talking, these quotations and audio clips allow for a change in pace, as well as building blocks for a transition or further discussion.

The focus of our podcast was climate change and how it affects the world around us. We first established what climate change actually is, so that the audience would have basic knowledge on the topic later on when listening to our discussions. After this knowledge was shared, we were free to discuss the impacts and results of climate change. A major part of this podcast was discussing the physical impacts of climate change. Perhaps the primary representation of this is the melting of sea ice in polar regions. In this segment, we examined the impacts on the climate and an insight into the future as a result of melting sea ice. This progressed into a conversation about the effects of climate change on land and marine ecosystems. Finally, we ended on a segment regarding ways to fix climate change, corporations combating climate change, and ways to prevent exacerbation of our current climate situation.

Podcasts are great in that they promote discussion about pressing topics, debates, and conversation skills. However, podcasts can be shallow when it comes to presenting information. Most of the information in podcasts are basic, surface level facts that can be easily found online. This is contrasted by traditional research papers, in which pages are dedicated to in depth information and support. It is hard to build off of information and analyze it in a podcast in a coherent manner. The live performance factor is also a limitation for in depth topic analysis. There is pressure to deliver accurate and engaging discussion so that the listener is consistently entertained. This automatically counts out the jargon filled sources, that would be extremely useful in discussions otherwise used in traditional research papers.

Research

As the term suggests, global warming a result of climate change where the average global temperature has been continuously rising. The world wildlife fund states that “The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts a further rise of between 1.4°C and 5.8°C by the end of the century. Climate change could therefore well be the knock-out punch for many species which are already under stress from overfishing and habitat loss” (WWF, n.d). These species are experiencing the consequences of human actions, and soon may be extinct unless they evolve and adapt to the ecosystem loss. One major point we touched on in the podcast was the melting of sea ice causing a rise in sea levels. The primary consequence of this sea level rise is the destruction of coastal ecosystems. Mangrove forests, swamplands and beaches are all at risk of destruction if the shoreline does go further inland. While these ecosystems are home to hundreds of species, losing these ecosystems could be catastrophic for inland ecosystems as well (US EPA, n.d). Many of the species that reside in these ecosystems are keystone species, which are essential for regulating and keeping the ecosystem balanced. The removal of a keystone species can cause chain reactions in food chains, natural environments, and surrounding ecosystems. Essentially, if climate change causes the destruction of coastal ecosystems, the chain reaction will affect all surrounding ecosystems.

Climate change could also spell the end for humans on this Earth as well. The United Nations has recently released a report that stated “[The] world [is] nearing critical point of no return” (United Nations, 2019). Climate change has increased the severity of weather patterns over the last few decades, which could threaten many areas across the globe. Droughts, wildfires, hurricanes, and floods could wipe out humanity if climate change continues at the current pace. Food supply could also be at risk with the increase in temperatures around the world. Crops need to be in a certain temperature range to grow, which is threatened by global warming. Decreased crop yields and productivity could cause a global hunger epidemic.

While the writing on the wall predicts that climate change will end civilization on Earth, there are many ways in which we can combat and reverse climate change. First off, society needs to cut the usage of fossil fuels in favor of renewable energy. This way, we can eliminate greenhouse gas emissions that trap heat. Humans also need to reverse the damage we have done from deforestation. Trees are the primary way in which carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas) is removed from the atmosphere. Planting more trees and stopping deforestation would be a major step in reversing many climate problems we now face.

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