

SGR Responsible Science Conference 2025

POLLUTER AND CYBER ELITES: A LETHAL ALIGNMENT?

Wednesday 15th October, 16.00-18.00 (BST) on Zoom

Register for a free ticket (donations welcome!) at: www.sgr.org.uk/events/

Programme

4.00 - 4.05 Welcome and introduction

Andrew Simms, SGR

4.05 - 4.10 **Participants' poll #1**

4.10 - 4.50 **Speaker session 1**

Polluter elites

Astrid Nilsson Lewis, Oxfam Sweden

Polluter and cyber elites: from common problems to common solutions

Dr Stuart Parkinson, SGR

The Intelligence Age is here

James Parr, Trillium Technologies

Comfort break

4.55 - 5.20 **Speaker session 2**

Climate, AI and ... me?

Dr Simon Clark, Science communicator and author

Equitable transition in the face of polluter and cyber elites

Emily Ghosh, Stockholm Environment Institute US

5.20 - 5.40 **Questions to the speakers and discussion**

5.40 - 5.55 **Participants' poll #2 and suggestions for action**

5.55 - 6.00 Closing remarks

6.15 - 6.45 AGM (SGR members only)

POLLUTER ELITES

Astrid Nilsson Lewis - Oxfam Sweden

The evidence is clear that urgent action is needed to avert total climate breakdown, and that today's excessive economic and power inequalities are undermining progress. The very existence of extreme wealth is supercharging emissions, and the same ideologies and power dynamics that are fuelling inequality are allowing countries and rich individuals to keep the world hooked on fossil fuels. Meanwhile, people living in poverty, those experiencing marginalization, and countries in the Global South are those impacted the hardest. Governments must break this vicious cycle.

Astrid Nilsson Lewis is a climate inequality policy advisor at Oxfam Sweden. She was the lead author of the report 'Climate Equality: A planet for the 99%' which made international headlines in 2023. She previously worked as a research associate at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI).

POLLUTER AND CYBER ELITES: FROM COMMON PROBLEMS TO COMMON SOLUTIONS

Stuart Parkinson - Scientists for Global Responsibility

Over the past few years, there have been several areas when the interests of the polluter elites – such as major fossil fuel corporations – and cyber elites – such leading IT and AI companies – have begun to overlap. In this presentation, I will focus on three areas: energy intensification; deregulation; and militarisation. I will highlight the problems that these overlaps can cause, which government policies need to change, and how campaigners for environmental protection, human rights, and peace can unite to challenge these powerful forces.

Dr Stuart Parkinson is executive director of SGR, a post he has held for over 20 years, where he has co-ordinated research, education and campaigning on ethical issues across science and technology. He holds a PhD in climate change science and a bachelor's degree in physics and engineering from Lancaster University. He was a post-doctoral research fellow at the Centre for Environmental Strategy, University of Surrey, for five years, and has also worked in industry and for environmental non-governmental organisations. He has also been an expert reviewer for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. He has authored/co-authored numerous reports, academic papers and popular science articles, on issues from climate change to nuclear weapons, and from science policy to the risks of emerging technologies.

THE INTELLIGENCE AGE IS HERE

James Parr - Trillium Technologies

The instrumentalists remind us that technology is neither automatically good, nor bad. But it's not neutral either and it's important not to embrace the hype with blind belief. Application wisdom is everything. The Frontier Development Lab (FDL.ai) has been at the forefront of "AI for good" for the

last 10 years; but we are also acutely aware of its limits - when does misplaced 'for good' actually become detrimental? As we power towards a new future where all our machines are intelligent, we need to understand precisely when this transformative new toolbox will hinder and when it will help.

***James Parr** is the founder and CEO of Trillium Technologies – a technology company specialising in the application of AI and cybernetics to grand challenges, such as climate change, resilience and disaster response. Part product designer - part scientist - part entrepreneur - part inventor, James is a hybrid who believes in the power of interdisciplinary approaches to fast-track innovation and is a passionate advocate of the power of teams and partnerships to do great things for the good of humankind.*

AI, CLIMATE AND ... ME?

Simon Clark – Science communicator and author

Machine learning or "AI" technologies are increasingly integrated into consumer software. Proponents claim that these tools - especially generative AI such as ChatGPT - will make our lives easier, but any benefits come at a steep price. The energy and water demands of the requisite data centres are enormous, and in a grid yet to fully decarbonise, this comes with a large carbon footprint. In fact, in many ways the current AI boom is a microcosm of the climate crisis itself.

***Dr Simon Clark** is an award-winning science communicator and author from Bath, UK. He holds a Master's degree in Physics from St Peter's College, University of Oxford, and a PhD in atmospheric physics from the University of Exeter. In 2023 he was made an Honorary Industrial Fellow of the University of Bristol. Simon's debut book, [Firmament](#) (2022), is a comprehensive introduction to atmospheric science, bridging the gap between weather and climate change. His YouTube channel promoting scientific literacy has over 600,000 subscribers.*

EQUITABLE TRANSITION IN THE FACE OF POLLUTER AND CYBER ELITES

Emily Ghosh - Stockholm Environment Institute US

We live in a world shaped by economic and environmental inequality and need to find pathways for rapid transition that can reverse both the climate emergency and the destructive gap between rich and poor. New technologies can bring benefits, but they can also intensify existing imbalances. What does an equitable transition look like and what does it mean for today's polluter and cyber elites?

***Emily Ghosh** is a Senior Scientist and the Program Director of the [Equitable Transitions](#) program at SEI US. She focuses on assessing the equity and environmental justice dimensions of the sustainability transition, and on developing climate change mitigation plans and policies that are equitable and just. Her research involves using quantitative analysis to build long-term energy and economic models, metrics, and indicators and evaluating strategies to reduce emissions in both developed and developing nations.*
