

Our world in 2040: the shift to “Carbon is Crime”

By 2040 our world has changed significantly. Thirty years ago, society lived a mindlessly selfish life, driven by its own desires to consume, but the staggering levels of emissions and waste which we created have forced us to impose strict carbon quotas and regulations upon the world; the **Selfish Bubble** has burst and now **Carbon is Crime**.

Driven by ever-increasing expected standards of living, humans have consumed thoughtlessly, on the quest of personal satisfaction. We have destroyed natural resource supplies, polluted the global water system and produced staggering levels of carbon emissions. Technology became crucial in maintaining the expected high living standards in the face of an increasingly resource-limited world. Developing countries, and in particular their cities, have posed a significant problem, as their populations swelled in size and demand.

After a series of events (they could be anything from devastating conflicts fought over the remaining natural resources to a peaceful global accord to an economic competitive advantage in technology), governmental organisations united to create a new global paradigm. Resources needed to be managed sustainably, international co-operation is needed to curb carbon emissions, and in a reversal of earlier trends, planetary health is now more important than human development.

Now the world is governed by strict carbon regulations, with heavy polluters being taxed out of existence. Industries have witnessed a huge shift in techniques, towards those which minimise waste and carbon emissions. Even individuals are now taxed on their carbon usage, being allocated carbon credits which can be used for travel, food, heating their homes and running domestic appliances.

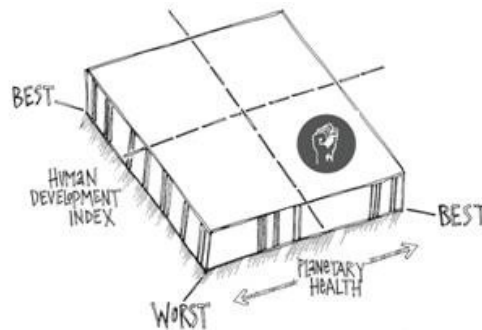
Public transport is heavily subsidised to encourage people to give up their cars and travel more sustainably, and many such transport systems are now powered by hydrogen cells or electricity, to further reduce carbon emissions.

Potentially, however, Social divides, are more clearly defined in 2040; there is a far greater gap between the haves and the have-nots, following the introduction of carbon rationing. The poor are unable to afford “permits to pollute”, hence are forced to resort to eco-terrorism, and using black markets and illegal smuggling systems to obtain expensive uncontaminated food, water and resources.

The world may be a cleaner, greener place but it may also a meaner place. How does your character impact and interact in the world, now that **Carbon is Crime**?

Carbon is Crime

In this a world where Carbon is Crime there is strict carbon regulation and rationed carbon quotas; social welfare and healthcare are not seen as priorities. Lacking access to low-carbon technology those at the broadening base of the social pyramid resort to illegal ways of acquiring food, energy and water. For the majority there is little security and access to quality education and medical care is limited.



Society is divided by wealth more noticeably than ever before. The wealthy hoard crucial energy resources, using them to drive luxury vehicles at weekends or indulge in carbon-costly foods, whilst the poor struggle to obtain basic supplies necessary to maintain a decent living standard; exacerbating social unrest. Cities boom, as they have the concentrated levels of wealth necessary to develop the low carbon technologies necessary to thrive.

Cities have become super-green whilst they expand. Peak oil is a thing of the past; de-carbonisation dominates the current technology paradigm. There is a lot of investment in monitoring and reducing carbon use, cradle-to-cradle technologies and incorporating de-carbonisation into new designs, materials, construction and waste disposal methods. Buildings and transport systems become greener and smarter, implementing ubiquitous monitoring technologies.

Due to de-carbonisation methods, globally emissions have fallen significantly; pursuing the low emissions scenario of the IPCC (see earlier footnote). Emissions-free technologies produce clean transport and manufacturing systems. Water supplies are monitored on micro rather than macro levels, reflecting a long overdue significance placed on access to clean water. As waste is no longer even produced, due to new methods of production which remove useless by-products, pollution levels of the natural world are at an all-time low.

The economy is based on reuse and repair, to minimise waste, and its inherent costs. Government revenue is significantly boosted by carbon-use taxation; which hits all strata of society. Mandatory life-costing has altered the way that production of goods and services is viewed and implemented, with visible economic costs attached to all forms of resource use.

Strong ecological and planning policies and heavy carbon taxation levels impel those disadvantaged by the wealth gap to pursue eco-terrorism. Lacking funds and access to new de-carbonization or emission-free technologies, the poorer members of society use black markets and illegal smuggling systems to obtain expensive uncontaminated food, water and resources. Much of the actions taken Society is crippled by disparities and suffers to maintain the health of the planet on which it dwells.