

Convenient Resources for "An Inconvenient Truth"

Frederick Stoss

University at Buffalo, State University of New York

Editor's Note: Before Al Gore's film *An Inconvenient Truth* won an Oscar for best documentary film, a member of the *Electronic Green Journal's* Editorial Board, Fred Stoss, traveled to Nashville, Tennessee. Fred was taught by former Vice President Al Gore and a group of scientists, educators, and communication specialists from The Climate Project to become "climate change messengers" and help spread the word about global warming across the United States. He was selected from thousands of applicants to participate in training sessions sponsored by The Climate Project. Attendees received presentation skills training and educational resources for sharing with others. They also received an intensive overview of the science of global warming. This training provides Stoss with the resources to conduct special versions of Gore's famous global warming slide show that is the basis for *An Inconvenient Truth*. As a librarian, he is frequently asked for resources to support the data and information described in the slide show.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences on February 25, 2007 awarded film director, Davis Guggenheim, and the production team of Lawrence Bender and Laurie David the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature for the film, *An Inconvenient Truth*. The Academy also awarded songwriter and lyricist, Melissa Etheridge the Academy Award for Achievement in Music Written for Motion Pictures (Original Song) that accompanied the film. This documentary hit, *An Inconvenient Truth*, evolved from the popular slide show presented over decades of lectures, presentations, hearings, and other public venues by Al Gore, Jr., Vice President of the United States (1993-2001). The film is a gripping account of the battles undertaken to understand and combat one of the most scientific and technically complex, politically complicated, and strenuously controversial environmental issues with which humankind has had to deal: Global Warming. ⁽¹⁾ [The Climate Project](#) was responsible for coordinating the initial training of

the 1,000 presenters of Mr. Gore's slide show, and is coordinating presentations around the country and compiling useful resources.

With the potential to affect biological, chemical, and climate cycles in the Earth's atmosphere, in its oceans, and on its lands, global warming demands worldwide attention and resolve. Gore wrote a book of the same title, as a companion to the movie. ⁽²⁾ Michiko Kakutani, book reviewer for *The New York Times*, cited *An Inconvenient Truth*, " ...as a user-friendly introduction to global warming and a succinct summary of many of the central arguments laid out in those other volumes, *An Inconvenient Truth* is lucid, harrowing and bluntly effective." ⁽³⁾

It is possible to look at this endeavor of former Vice President Gore as an epilogue to his 1992 best selling *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* (Houghton Mifflin). *An Inconvenient Truth* presents a scientific perspective of the issue of global warming, known also as a component of global climate change, and represents a slide show and lecture Gore has been delivering to lecture halls around the world over the past several years. Much like Gore's earlier best-selling book, *An Inconvenient Truth* does not pick up a political tone, but rather a tone of addressing global warming as a moral or ethical imperative.

Needless to say, global warming and *An Inconvenient Truth* was 2006's hot environmental topic (according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 2006 was actually the hottest year ever recorded in the U.S. and December 2006 to February 2007 was the warmest meteorological winter ever recorded). ⁽⁴⁾ In mid-July, The Discovery Channel began airing a documentary, *Global Warming: What You Need to Know*, with Tom Brokaw, now available in DVD format with enhanced features. Later in the autumn, Stonehaven Productions of Canada released a completely revised and condensed version of its critically acclaimed three-part Discovery series, *The Great Warming*, as a major theatrical release on November 3, 2006.

Global warming is a controversial issue. Much like the controversies that were debated, studied, lobbied, and battled over decades on issues such as acid rain, ozone depletion, lead-paint poisoning (especially in children), the ecological damages related to the rampant and irresponsible use of pesticides (such as DDT), and perhaps most dramatically, the adverse health effects associated to smoking tobacco.

Readers and viewers of *An Inconvenient Truth* may be looking for sources from which to locate the science behind the issue. Provided here are some top-ten lists that might help individuals (teachers and librarians in particular), groups, and organizations lead the discussion on where to go for more information in search of their own *Truths*.

10 Must-Use Internet Data Sources

1. **[Trends \(Online\): A Compendium of Data on Global Change](#)** provides synopses of frequently used time series of global-change data, such as concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from historical (ice core) and modern records; estimates of global, regional, and national CO₂ emissions from the combustion of fossil fuels and other sources; and long-term temperature records. Global coverage ranges from individual sites to the entire globe and from the Earth's surface to the lower stratosphere. Data records include tables; graphs; discussions of methods for collecting, measuring, and reporting the data; trends in the data, and references to literature providing further information. All data appearing in *Trends Online* are available, on request, from the Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center (CDIAC) and World Data Center for Atmospheric Trace Gases at Oak Ridge National Laboratory at no cost. Additional global change data are found in CDIAC's 70+ numeric data packages.
2. **[Global Change Master Directory](#)** is a comprehensive, searchable source of data and information with broad coverage of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, solid earth and biosphere. Linked resources include the US Global Change Research Program's Science Topics, Agency Data Centers, Educational Resources, Libraries and Information Centers.
3. **[Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#)** (IPCC) was established by the World Meteorological Organization and United Nations Environment Programme to assess scientific, technical, and socio-economic information relevant for the understanding of climate change. The IPCC is currently finalizing its Fourth Assessment Report "Climate Change 2007." There are individual reports by the three Working Groups providing a comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of the current state of knowledge on climate change. The Synthesis Report integrates the information around six topic areas.

4. **National Climatic Data Center** (NCDC) is the world's largest active archive of weather data. NCDC produces numerous climate publications and responds to data requests from all over the world. NCDC operates the World Data Center for Meteorology, which is collocated at NCDC in Asheville, North Carolina, and the World Data Center for Paleoclimatology which is located in Boulder, Colorado.

5. **The US Global Change Research Information Office** (GCRIO) provides access to data and information on climate change research, adaptation/mitigation strategies and technologies, and global change-related educational resources on behalf of the various U.S. Federal Agencies that are involved in the US Global Change Research Program (USGCRP).

6. **The Center for International Earth Science Information Network** (CIRESIN) is a center within the Earth Institute at Columbia University. CIRESIN works at the intersection of the social, natural, and information sciences, and specializes in online data and information management. Special programs within CIRESIN include the World Data Center for Human Interactions in the Environment and its Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center, is one of the Distributed Active Archive Centers (DAACs) in the Earth Observing System Data and Information System (EOSDIS) of the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

7. **World Meteorological Organization** is an intergovernmental organization with a membership of 187 Member States and Territories. It originated from the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), which was founded in 1873. Established in 1950, WMO became the specialized agency of the United Nations in 1951 for meteorology (weather and climate). The World Climate Programme is maintained by WMO and can be found on the WMO Homepage clicking on the appropriate items found in the WMO Programmes or Topics drop-down menus.

8. **International Geosphere-Biosphere Program** (IGBP) and the International Council for Science (ICSU, formerly the International Council for Scientific Unions) serve as international global change research coordination bodies. These organizations provide scientific and technical oversight of the international research efforts and fill critical quality assurance functions. ICSU: <http://www.icsu.org/>

9. ***Global Warming: Where You Live: United States*** is a site provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, where you will find clickable maps of the United States (you'll need Macromedia Flash Version 6 or higher) with an assortment of state-specific resources on the impacts of climate change, also has many links to EPA Regional Offices, including resources for teachers and students.

10. ***United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*** (FCCC) is a source of international news, data, and documents on global climate change. The Framework Convention was adopted at the United Nations in May 1999 and opened for signatures at the June 1992 UNCED (United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development) Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. Subsequently in 1997 the Kyoto Protocol was developed and shares the Convention's objective, principles and institutions. The Kyoto Protocol significantly strengthens the Convention by committing Annex I Parties (36 industrialized countries) to individual, legally-binding targets to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Only Parties to the Convention that have also become Parties to the Protocol (i.e. by ratifying, accepting, approving, or acceding to it) will be bound by the Protocol's commitments. 163 countries have ratified the Protocol to date. The United States is not a member of the Parties to the Convention.

10 Must-Read Books

1. ***Ignition: What You Can Do to Fight Global Warming and Spark a Movement*** Jonathan Isham and Sissel Waage, Eds. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2007. ISBN 978-1-59726-156-2.

This is a compilation of essays for people to take action and address the solutions to the problem of global warming in their homes; churches, synagogues, mosques; schools and campus; communities; board rooms, and executive and legislative offices of local to national governments. Twenty-six environmental leaders including, Bill McKibben, Gus Speth, Eileen Clausen, Ted Nordhaus, and Robert Musil write the essays. These essays tackle the fundamental question about global warming, "What can I do?"

2. ***Global Climate Change***. Paul McCaffrey, Ed. Bronx, NY: H. W. Wilson Company, 2006. ISBN 082421059X.

A series of essays written from across disciplines examine the complexities of the technologies and policy tools and policy making needed to address climatic changes worldwide.

3. ***The Carbon Buster's Home Energy Handbook: Slowing Climate Change and Saving Money***. Godo Stoye. Gabriola Island, British Columbia: New Society Press, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-86571-569-1.

Discusses a full array of options for reducing the emissions of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, from installation of energy efficiencies and conservation practices, to investment strategies that reap a second benefit of saving money while saving the environment.

4. ***The Long Summer: How Climate Changed Civilization***. Brian M Fagan. New York: Basic Books, 2004. ISBN 0465022812.

Examines episodic extreme climatic events in the world's history over the past 20,000 years and how they shaped or changed human civilizations.

5. ***Red Sky at Morning: America and the Crisis of the Global Environment***. James Gustave Speth. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004. ISBN 0300102321.

Responding to global environmental threats requires dramatic and often drastic approaches from national policies to individuals changing styles of life and habit. Argues that far-reaching changes are required and often impossible to achieve. Written by former Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Director of the President's (Carter) Council on Environmental Quality, founder of the World Resources Institute, and Dean of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

6. ***Global Warming, Library in a Book***. Douglas Long New York, NY: Facts of File, 2003. ISBN 978-0-8160-5137-3.

This reference guide is a carefully designed and compiled guide to the literature and information resources on this topic. It provides in terse style an overview of the issue; chronology of important events; glossary of terms; the major bibliographic tools for locating information resources; biographical sketches of key individuals; a detailed annotated bibliography of monographic works, journal articles, and Internet documents; and a directory of key organizations.

7. ***World Resources 2005: The Wealth of the Poor—Managing Ecosystems to Fight Poverty.***

World Resources Institute, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Development Program, World Bank Washington, DC: World Resources Institute, 2005. ISBN 1569835824.

This year's annual compilation addresses an ecosystems approach to resolving poverty, with sections and chapters addressing specific problems and issues, the work includes graphs, table and charts in areas related to climate, the Earth's Atmosphere.

8. ***With Speed and Violence: Why Scientists Fear Tipping Points in Climate Change.*** Fred Pearce Boston: Beacon Press, 2005. ISBN 978-0-8070-8576-9.

This work not only reviews the scientific and technical underpinnings of the topics of global warming and climate change, but does so in a compelling fashion from the perspective of scientists who fear that "we are on the precipice of climate system tipping points beyond which there is no redemption."

9. ***Boiling Point: How Politicians, Big Oil and Coal, Journalists, and Activists are Fueling the Climate Crisis--and What we can do to Avert Disaster.*** Ross Gelbspan . New York: Basic Books, 2004. ISBN: 046502761X.

Seven "snapshots" or perspectives of global change examine the broad spectrum of beliefs and disbeliefs about global warming.

10. ***The Weather Makers: How Man is Changing the Climate and What It Means for Life on Earth.*** Tim F. Flannery. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005. ISBN: 0871139359.

In addition to giving a scientific and technical overview and history of climate change in an easy-to-read text, this book also provides specific action plans for lawmakers, investors, and policy makers to implement to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by up to 70 percent (think alternative and renewable energy resources such as solar, wind, and geothermal).

10 Must-See DVDs or Videos

1. ***Global Warming: The Signs and the Science***. 2005. DVD ISBN 0793690757

PBS Home Video Production aired on Nov. 2, 2005; documentary from around the world examines complex issues of climate change, and the people living in the most potentially threatened places. DVD contains features not broadcast.

2. ***The State of the Planet***. 2005. DVD

Investigates critical environmental and earth science questions of the 21st century, including global warming as an issue that is "a false alarm or a gathering storm?"

3. ***Strange Days on Planet Earth***. 2005. DVD (2discs). ISBN 0792292596

Four-part National Geographic series examines rapidly changing climates around the world and the challenges they present.

4. ***What's Up with the Weather?*** 2000. VHS: ISBN 157807486X

Produced by WGBH/PBS in Boston, Massachusetts as a NOVA/Frontline special report explaining the linkages between weather and changing climate and if they correlate to human activities.

5. ***Global Warming: Hype or Hazard?*** 2003. DVD ISBN 0736597689

Bjorn Lomborg

Films for the Humanities & Sciences provides a skeptic's focus on global warming, "arguing that time and money would be better spent tackling more concrete and rapidly spreading environmental issues."

6. ***Hot Planet, Cold Comfort.*** 2005. DVD.

John Angier; Alan Alda; Randy Roos

This PBS Home video, premiering on February 16, 2005, looks at recent climate data and large-scale climatic changes, taking a closer look at the impacts of global warming emphasizing impacts on glaciers, particularly in Alaska.

7. ***Greenhouse Earth: An Uncontrolled Experiment.*** 2001, 2003. DVD. ISBN 0736567097.

Anne Hoffmann; Rick Bluett

Films for the Humanities & Sciences takes a comprehensive and scientific look at the issues of global warming with a richly illustrated and graphically enhanced overview of modeling, simulations, computer graphics, animations from prehistoric to modern times

8. ***The Impact of Global Warming.*** 2003. ISBN 0736564527.

Films for the Humanities examines extreme weather events in the world's most recent history and examines them in the context of changing climates and discusses if short-term global warming trends are hastened and heightened by air pollution from human activities.

9. ***Changing Climates: The Science***. 2002. DVD. ISBN 0237527480.

Ken Pugh

Looks at the impacts of the Industrial Revolution and the burning of fossil fuels as the primary sources of carbon dioxide that is warming the Earth

10. ***World Almanac's Guide to Extreme Weather***. 2002. DVD. ISBN 1930545916.

Discovery Communications looks at the causes and effects of the most extreme weather and how meteorologists use sophisticated tracking tools to study storms.

10 Books You Must Read to Children

1. ***Why are the Ice Caps Melting? The Dangers of Global Warming*** . Anne F Rockwell, Paul Meisel . New York: Collins, 2006. 33 p. ISBN: 0060546697. Tells about the greenhouse effect, recycling, and what you can do to help fight global warming.
2. ***Global Warming*** . Peggy J Parks San Diego, CA: Kidhaven Press, 2004. 48 p. ISBN: 0737718226 . Explains what global warming is, how it occurs, and what is being done to protect future generations.
3. ***Global Warming*** . Kathiann M Kowalski. New York: Benchmark Books, 2004. 142 p. ISBN: 9780761415824. Defines and discusses global warming, its possible effects on the world, and arguments about whether or not such a phenomenon is really occurring.

4. ***Earth's Changing Climate.*** Trevor Smith. Mankato, MN: Smart Apple Media, 2004. 56 p. ISBN: 9781583403587. Explores factors in climatic change, such as greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide emissions, looks at international efforts to remedy the problem, and discusses whether human activities are contributing to global warming.

5. ***The Greenhouse Effect: Warming the Planet.*** Darlene R Stille. Minneapolis, MN: Compass Point Books, 2007. 48 p. ISBN: 9780756519568.

6. ***Our Warming Planet.*** Cheng Puay Lim. Chicago, IL Raintree, 2004. 24 p. ISBN: 780739870143.

7. ***Global Warming.*** Dan Minkel. Farmington Hills, MI: Greenhaven Press, 2007. 112 p. ISBN: 9780737735642.

8. ***The Ice Ages.*** Don Nardo . San Diego, CA: KidHaven Press, 2006. 48 p. ISBN: 9780737730555. Describes what an ice age is, when and why they occurred, and whether or not humans may trigger another one.

9. ***Climate Change: Is the World in Danger?*** Gary Barr. Chicago, IL: Heinemann Library, a division of Reed Elsevier, 2007. 56 p. ISBN: 9781403488305.

10. ***Critical Perspectives on Planet Earth.*** Jennifer Viegas. New York: Rosen Pub. Group, 2007. 278 p. ISBN: 9781404206878.

10 Must Have Resources for Teachers

1. **[NOW For Educators: Global Warming \(PBS\)](#)**

PBS Teachers is a program site from the Public Broadcasting System that provides multimedia resources and professional development for America's preK-12 educators. Global warming is one of their topics and provides an in-depth look at the teaching of global warming in the classroom.

2. **Teachers' Guide to High Quality Educational Materials on Climate Change and Global Warming**

This guide points K-12 educators to the best sites for teaching about climate change: several that offer first rate background material, and others that include detailed lesson plans and experiments. It begins with Top Ten Things You Need to Know about Global Warming and a note about why there is so much controversy surrounding this issue.

3. **Global Warming (Weather Eye)**

This lesson plan explains what global warming is and why there is serious debate about it. It also reviews the two sides of the global warming argument: believers who think that global warming is an environmental threat, and skeptics who say that global warming does not even exist.

4. **Curriculum Guide for the Climate Impacts Maps (Union of Concerned Scientists)**

This teaching resource accompanies *Global Warming: Early Warning Signs* - a science-based world map <http://www.climatehotmap.org/>, depicting local and regional consequences of global climate change. The Union of Concerned Scientists produced this Curriculum Guide. The guides is for students and teachers in grades 9-12, and the materials align with National Learning Standards for Science, Geography, Social Studies, Language Arts, Environmental Education, and Technology. A more updated resource from the Union of Concerned Scientists is at http://www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/science/global-warming-materials-for-educators.html.

5. **Lesson Plans: Global Warming (Atmospheric Radiation Measurement [ARM] Program of the U.S. Department of Energy)**

Science-based lesson plans from the ARM Teachers' lounge.

6. **Fight Global Warming (Starbucks Coffee Company and Global Green USA)**

Learn smart solutions to global warming by playing the Planet Green Game. The Planet Green Game provides a thought provoking examination of global warming through engaging and informative game play while encouraging individuals to become part of the solution in their own lives. The game also assists individuals - through simple tools and links - in advocating action by elected officials, business and community leaders.

7. **Global Warming Education**

Provides an inventory of hands-on activities, lesson plans, articles, TV links for teachers (and their students) that address the causes and effects of global warming and the solutions needed to reverse and fix the problems: transportation, alternative energy, and issues of sustainability.

8. **Lesson Plan: Global Climate Change: The Effects of Global Warming**

Teachers' Domain is a Pathways Portal to the National Science Digital Library. This portal provides lists of resources, lesson plans for grades 9-12 (and suitable for non-science majors in the 2-year and 4-year liberal arts college setting).

9. **Global Warming Student Speakout - Top 50 Ideas**

Google recently partnered with Global SchoolNet and invited teachers and students to use Google Docs & Spreadsheets collaborative software in a project to brainstorm strategies for combating global warming. Children of all ages from more than 80 schools around the world participated, and on November 27, 2006 Google took out a full-page ad in USA Today to put their ideas in the spotlight. Here they are.

10. **The Science of Global Warming**

This software provides a hands-on experimental tool for investigating global warming and the greenhouse effect. Several background topics are included: irradiation, photons, molecules and gases. The heart of the program is an atmospheric general circulation model (GCM), which allows users to vary several important parameters, including concentrations of various

greenhouse gases, cloud cover, and snow and ice feedbacks. A good tool for demonstrating the complexities associated with the global warming debate. The Eisenhower National Clearinghouse recommends this resource.

10 Must-Seek Places for Global Warming Solutions

1. **Carbon Footprint Calculator (World Resources Institute)**

The SafeClimate carbon footprint calculator allows you to determine carbon dioxide emissions from major sources: home energy consumption and transportation by car and plane.

2. **Citizre (REnU)**

The Going Green with Solar program is the first to give you the chance to adopt green energy in your home without having to make a huge investment.

3. **Driving Green**

Welcome to DrivingGreen.com, the environmentally friendly website that allows you to easily and inexpensively offset the greenhouse gases emitted every time you drive, fly, or throw a party!

4. **Energy Star (U.S. EPA & U.S. DOE)**

Energy Star is a government-backed program helping businesses and individuals protect the environment through superior energy efficiency.

5. **Fight Global Warming (Environmental Defense)**

Pollution, especially from cars and from making electricity, is a major cause of global warming. Find out how you can make a difference.

6. **Help Stop Global Warming (Global Green)**

Global Green seeks to create a value shift to reconnect humanity with the environment with its threefold climate strategy: Showing the Human Face of Global Warming, Advocating for Smart Climate Solutions and Demonstrating Climate Action for Communities.

7. **How to Fight Global Warming (Natural Resources Defense Council)**

The biggest cause of global warming is the carbon dioxide released when fossil fuels like oil and coal are burned for energy. So, when you save energy, you fight global warming (and save money, of course). Here are some easy steps you can take.

8. **Lick Global Warming (coalition of environmental nonprofit groups)**

A global consensus now exists among scientists & environmental experts that the world's well-being is significantly at risk from the effects of global warming & that immediate action must be taken to begin reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

9. **Smart Energy Solutions (Sierra Club)**

The SafeClimate carbon footprint calculator allows you to determine carbon dioxide emissions from major sources: home energy consumption and transportation by car and plane.

10. **Stop Global Warming**

There is no more important cause than the call to action to save our planet. This is a movement about change, as individuals, as a country, and as a global community. We are all contributors to global warming and we all need to be part of the solution.

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Footnotes

(1) Information about the documentary film is on The Climate Crisis Home Page at

<http://www.climatecrisis.net/>.

(2) Gore, Albert. (2006). *An inconvenient truth: the planetary emergency of global warming and what we can do about it*. Emmaus: Rodale Press. (ISBN: 1594865671, ISBN: 978-0-670-06271-3 for juvenile literature).

(3) Kakutani, Michiko. (2006). On global warming, passionate warnings with pictures. [Review of the book *The An inconvenient truth: the planetary emergency of global warming and what we can do about it*]. *New York Times*, May 23, E6.

(4) NOAA. Climate Prediction Center. Climate press releases <http://www.cpc.noaa.gov/press.shtml>

Frederick Stoss <fstoss@buffalo.edu> is an Associate Librarian in the Arts & Sciences Libraries at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York and a member of the *Editorial Board of the Electronic Green Journal*. He is co-editor of the first three print editions of *Trends: A Compendium of Data on Global Change* and has written several articles on the topic, including, "The Heat Is On! U.S. Global Change Research and Policy" in the August/September 2000 issue of *EContent* 23:4:36-44. (An updated version

of the Websites compiled for this article is maintained as a part of a comprehensive ALS Library Web Guide, "Global Climate Change," <http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/asl/guides/environment/ecochange.html>

Fred is also the co-Chair of the ALA Task Force on the Environment.