

Hacking the COP: The Climate Games in Paris 2015

The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination (LeLabofii) has been bringing together artists and activists to create new forms of creative resistance for more than 10 years. They can be reached at www.labofii.net, info@labofii.net and on Twitter @labofii

Introduction

It's December 2015. The COP21 has just opened in Paris. Armed with courage, a mobile phone and plans for creative mischief your team is ready to merge street and online action in the world's largest Disobedient Action Adventure Game, *The Climate Games*...

For its 19th experiment entitled #hackcop, *The Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination* (Labofii), has been working with various climate justice movements (including 350.org, CoalitionClimate21, Corporate Europe Observatory, Climate Justice Action, Climate Express - Belgium, Groen Front - Netherlands and Reclaim The Power – UK) and cultural centres (Berliner Festspiele, ArtsAdmin - London, Vooruit - Ghent) to facilitate a series of Hackathons (i.e. an intense hands on workshop) to prepare *The Climate Games*.

To “hack” is to redesign the use of something, to make something do something it has never done before. The #hackcops aimed to transform the way we plan and carry out creative resistance towards climate justice, using the combined knowledge of citizens working together. Following an open call,

they brought artists, activists, designers, hackers and gamers together in an atmosphere of cooperation and self-management, using popular educational tools, games and horizontal decision making. Over 100 people worked together over three separate weeks to co-create *The Climate Games*, a new form of action that exists in between public space and cyberspace, the virtual and the real, the world of gaming and the world of activism.

The “Climate Games” framework

The Climate Games is a mass participation transmedia action framework which merges the street, disobedient bodies and the internet, creating a crowd sourced cartography of creative resistance in real time and real space. The concept was first developed in the summer of 2014 by Groen Front, and in July 2015 was replayed in the port of Amsterdam, with 20 teams taking actions to disrupt the coal and agribusiness industries. The #hackcops took this initial idea and have been developing and improving it for larger scale actions during the COP21.

During *The Climate Games* people are invited to form teams and try to score as many points as possible by

*“To hack
is to differ”*

Mackenzie Wark,
Hacker Manifesto,
2004

doing creative non violent direct actions across the gaming field, which in the case of COP21 will be Paris and local decentralised territories. Police and other security will be integrated into the game as “team blue”, whose task it will be to make it as challenging as possible for the other teams to score points. Those who have been sabotaging UN climate summits, those providing “false solutions” to the climate crisis and profiting from it – geo-engineers, the nuclear industry, carbon marketeers, industry lobbyists etc., will be the “grey team”. The beauty of the Climate Games is that it enables a whole diversity of different nonviolent action approaches to participate in its framework across a wide territory.

Actions will take place without central coordination. However, activists will be able to use an open-source smart phone app to report their actions anonymously and in real time by submitting photos and video material that will appear on a digital map of the gaming field as well as crowd sourcing the position of the opposing teams, Team blue and grey. Developers and coders have been building the mapping tool during the Hackathons and as well as secure anonymity features, the smart phone app also might include features like a momentum counter that speeds up the more actions that are reported and a feature that makes the phone vibrate when you are within 100m of the police or a corporate site. The map will be accessible through both the smart phone app as well as via the Climate Games website (www.climategames.net) and players without smart phones will be able to text in reports to a hub.

Players not in Paris will be able to take part through actions in their own locality or via online hacktivism missions.

Of course no games would be complete without a glitzy award ceremony. On the final night of the games a theatrical ceremony will take place in Paris and be live streamed for those who took actions across the world. Teams will be presented with prizes for striking gameplay, including *The Courage Is Contagious Cup* awarded to the team that explores the edges of its comfort zone, *The Award for Ultimate Unexpectedness* won for actions that take everyone by surprise, *The Pissed Myself Cup* for the acts of disobedience that make us Laugh Out Loud, *The Big Splash Cup* awarded to the team whose actions make news headlines, *The Copcop Spotters Badge* for those that report the most positions of Team blue on the map and last but by no means least, *The Most Effective Action Award* for the gameplay that results in a significant impact – such as immediate CO₂ reductions.

Get ready to Play

It's easy to take part in the Climate Games. First, form a team with your friends and register online (there is even an award for best team name), then plan some creative mischief in Paris, in your own habitat or online. Download the App and at anytime before and during the games you can feed the collective intelligence by anonymously reporting and mapping the opposing players on the global gaming field.

Take your action (in round 1 and/or 2) and report on it on the map to unlock the awards and give points to the entire game. And don't forget to come to or log onto the award ceremony at the end.

Round one of the Climate Games will take place on the 30th of November the day following the mass marches and on the opening day of the COP21. Its

theme will be the greenwashers and peddlers of false solutions. Round two will last 48 hours, beginning on the COP's last day the 11th of December and culminating with the mass disobedience on the 12th where tens of thousands will not only have the last word, but take the struggle for Climate Justice into their own hands.

