

## Deviant and guilt-ridden: Computing within psychological limits

*Bran Knowles, Elina Eriksson*

### Abstract

In this position paper we discuss a set of problems particular to computing within limits that draws on psychological and sociological barriers. The enormity of the predicaments we are facing, global climate change and resource scarcity, together with the social, cultural and national settings in which we are facing these predicaments, are seriously hampering our possibility to address them. We argue that without confronting the underlying psychology that perpetuates our current state of un-sustainability, there is little computing can hope to achieve. Furthermore, we also argue that these psychological limits to computing do not only concern the users of our systems, often portrayed as the people in need of behavioral change, but also ourselves, as researchers within computing. In this paper we start exploring what these psychological limits could be, what ideas computing for sustainability has tried but should now retire, and start discussing a way forward.

### Full Text:

[HTML](#)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v20i8.6127>



A Great Cities Initiative of the University of Illinois at Chicago [University Library](#).

© *First Monday*, 1995-2019. ISSN 1396-0466.

In this position paper we discuss a set of problems particular to computing within limits that draws on psychological and sociological barriers. The enormity of the predicaments we are facing, global climate change and resource scarcity, together with the social, cultural and national settings in which we are facing these predicaments, are seriously hampering our possibility to address them. We argue that without confronting the underlying psychology that perpetuates our current state of un-sustainability, there is little computing can hope to achieve. Introduction Interlude 1: Confessions of a guilt-ridden closet activist Interlude 2: A reluctant academic deviant Ideas we can retire The end of the world as we know it. Introduction.

[Journal Help](#)

#### USER

Username

Password

Remember me

#### JOURNAL CONTENT

Search

Search Scope

All

Browse

- [By Issue](#)
- [By Author](#)
- [By Title](#)
- [Other Journals](#)

#### FONT SIZE



#### CURRENT ISSUE

[ATOM](#) 1.0

[RSS](#) 2.0

[RSS](#) 1.0

#### ARTICLE TOOLS

[Print this article](#)

[Indexing metadata](#)

[How to cite item](#)

Email this article (Login required)

Email the author (Login required)

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

*Bran Knowles*

research student at Lancaster University (U.K.)

.....  
*Elina Eriksson*

Researcher at Green Leap and CESC (Centre for Sustainable Communication), and a teacher in the Department of Media Technology and Interaction Design (MID) at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden