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Climate change? There are emojis for that.

by Jan O'Brien



Emojis have become a regular part of today's online conversations. Those little pictures have evolved far beyond smiley faces. There are now hundreds of icons to liven up a message, from rainbows and hearts, to tiny koala bears and margaritas.

And now, you can download a new set of digital icons called "Climoji". It includes cartoon depictions of the causes and effects of climate change, including power plants, wildfires, and melting glaciers.

Texting or tweeting one of these images might seem trivial. But Marina Zurkow, the artist and New York University professor who leads the Climoji project, says that it's important to find new ways to communicate about climate change.

Zurkow: "The truth of the matter is we have a lot of negative things to face, but how do we get people to face negative conditions? Our hypothesis is that people are really tired of gloom and doom, and if there was anything we could do to contribute in a way to producing some levity around these difficult issues, as well as a shorthand, that we were doing something substantial for the conversation."

For some people, the light-hearted, visual vocabulary of Climoji makes it easier to talk about climate change.

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Climoji image graphic: Created by David McCarthy.