

# STRANGE DAYS ON PLANET EARTH 2020

IMAGINE EARTH IN THE YEAR 2020...

*the world has embarked on a winning path to slow climate change; clean energy use is exploding around the globe; all people have access to clean and fresh water; we are feeding ourselves without compromising the land and sea; life-sustaining ecosystems are being valued and protected... and for the first time in years, parents are starting to believe their children will inherit a better, safer world. Imagine a healthy planet with healthy humans living on it...*

**The decisions we make today will affect all life on our planet for decades to come.**

**How will we move those decisions from minor to monumental?**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

START YOUR CAR, SIT BACK, AND THINK:

- The invisible molecules of CO<sub>2</sub> that you are releasing into the air are contributing to an increased warming of the atmosphere.
- As the average atmospheric temperature rises, so too does the average sea surface temperature of the Indian Ocean, half a world away.
- A warmer Indian Ocean sends a pulse of energy over the poles to the Azores, where it impacts the gears of a giant pressure system.
- The pressure system picks up dust from Lake Chad in Sub-Saharan Africa, where people are already suffering because the lake is drying up.
- The dust from the lake blows across the vast Atlantic Ocean and arrives in the Caribbean where it rains from the sky and is linked to a disturbing increase in asthma among children.

These are strange days on planet Earth. Just as we are uncovering the hidden gears and cogs that make up Earth's life support systems, we are realizing that our simple everyday actions—from driving, to fertilizing and watering our lawns, to buying food—have profound global consequences. Climate change... Ecosystem degradation... Clean energy... Poverty... Disease... Ours is a complexly interconnected world, and we discover new connections every day.

***Strange Days on Planet Earth 2020 (working title) is about connections.*** Connecting some of the greatest issues of our day. Connecting people and new ideas. Connecting people to one another. Connecting citizens into global communities working on the behalf of the planet.

***Strange Days on Planet Earth 2020 challenges established perceptions.*** Problems, now perceived to be disconnected, hopeless—or worse, harmless—will be unveiled as globally connected, solvable and urgent.

***Strange Days on Planet Earth 2020 seeks to create a global community of citizens working together for a more sustainable, healthy world.*** Through venues and networks Americans trust, it will deliver new information, ignite new sparks, and create new possibilities for action and results.

## How?

*Strange Days 2020 (WT)* is the potent integration of high-tech and high-touch, breakthrough scientific discoveries and cutting edge social science, to motivate change and galvanize Americans around a shared vision of the future. It builds momentum on the synergies between multiple elements: **powerful television** that broadens viewers' horizons; **personally targeted Internet** that unites people behind shared values; **communication technologies** that enable powerful forums for the exchange of ideas; **community groups and grass roots organizations** that reach people where they live, work and pray.

*Strange Days 2020* seeks to create a global community of citizens working together for a more sustainable, healthy world. It will rely on venues and networks Americans trust to deliver new information, ignite new sparks, and create new possibilities for action and results.

## Why Now?

**The promise of this moment is extraordinary.** The American public is more concerned about the great challenges of the day than ever before. Americans are groping for a way to understand the complexity of the world around them—and to make connections that honor that complexity while rendering their world more understandable and ultimately, more hopeful.

America faces critical choices about who we want to be in the world, and whether we will meet the challenges before us at the scale and speed required. **Yet traditional solutions have proved inadequate and traditional advocacy has fallen short** of sparking enough action from enough Americans to create lasting momentum for systemic change.

## Why Us?

*Strange Days on Planet Earth* first aired on PBS in the spring of 2004. Hosted by actor and activist Edward Norton, it was an instant success. In its pilot season, the series beat PBS primetime averages by 30%, reaching 12 million U.S. viewers. It has since reached millions more internationally, through rebroadcasts and the web. *Strange Days on Planet Earth* was widely lauded for exposing in sharp focus a web of invisible connections of Earth's life support systems. For the first time, documentary film-makers combined complex science with gripping story-telling, tailored audience research, innovative uses of the Internet, citizen science, and live customized programs for Congress and CEOs—all focused on stewardship of our natural resources. The series won fourteen major international prizes, including Best Series at Wildscreen, the environmental equivalent of the Academy Awards®.

Sea Studios Foundation, the producer of *Strange Days on Planet Earth*, represents the next generation of media. Through the use of integrated media, it seeks to amplify and elevate the level of discourse around key social and environmental issues, and to provide tangible ways for individuals to create meaningful change.

## 2. OPPORTUNITY AND NEED

We are inspired by a vision for a genuinely sustainable future; a healthy planet with healthy humans living on it. We are moved to act because the scale and pace of international responses to extreme poverty, disease, freshwater scarcity, climate change and biodiversity loss, are woefully inadequate to the scale of the problems.

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We believe the United States, as sole superpower in an increasingly interdependent world, has the capacity to hurry history; to accelerate problem solving that will lead to a better future. We also believe that doing so will require more than enlightened leadership from elected officials and CEOs. It will require a much broader, more engaged and more active constituency that has the mindset to support the kind of sustained investment, involvement, and leadership needed to tackle global challenges effectively.

Today, the American public is more concerned about these issues than ever before. Advances in communications technology have created massive global communities – YouTube, iTunes, MySpace, care2, FaceBook and others. Unprecedented opportunities have appeared to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and the public. The individual has become an active participant in major global processes.

Many recognize that this is a unique moment. In the last few years alone, hundreds of organizations have emerged as champions of diverse causes, including the alleviation of extreme poverty, eradication of malaria, climate change, rainforest protection and others. Initiatives as diverse as Bono's DATA, Al Gore's Alliance for Climate Protection, and "American Idol Gives Back" have touched many and have moved them to act. Web portals such as moveon.org and care2.com are attracting people with their sharp, focused messages and connecting them to campaigns that channel their energies and help them participate.

**Yet whatever we are doing to reach out to the American public, and however successful we have been in engaging citizens in discrete policy debates, it is simply not enough.** We still lack a broad, bipartisan public constituency for bold action on the interlocking problems of climate change, ecosystem degradation, poverty and disease. And while issue-specific campaigns are leading to individual victories—clean energy is growing, diseases are being cured, lives are being saved—collectively these campaigns are not generating the sea change that would produce dramatic advances. **Without fundamental shifts in attitudes, behaviors and policies, we are not likely to fulfill the promise to improve human livelihoods** set forth in the United Nations 2015 Millennium Development Goals; we will not be able to prevent the destruction of vital ecosystems or the loss of biodiversity, as we set out to do at the Rio 1992 Earth Summit.

If we are to move decisively toward a healthy, sustainable future, we need:

- **More globally minded thinkers and doers.** More ordinary U.S. citizens and decision-makers must grasp that our fates are increasingly bound with those of others around the globe. Only then we will achieve the level of international collaboration required to achieve these goals.
- **More holistic thinking and problem solving.** Global problems must not be addressed in a balkanized fashion, with little understanding or appreciation of the connections among issues. Major advances will only occur when we eliminate the artificial boundaries between human health, clean energy, poverty alleviation, and ecosystem degradation.
- **Stronger, steadier U.S. public support.** Public support on many global issues must deepen, and engagement must be consistent and broad. A much larger constituency of the U.S. public must become globally literate, their imagination and passion engaged in bold problem solving.

*Strange Days 2020* is poised to address these needs, educate and galvanize Americans behind a positive vision for the future, and change the scale of global activism.

### 3. STRANGE DAYS ON PLANET EARTH 2020

*Strange Days 2020* brings together familiar mass media, personally targeted Internet, and locally relevant community activities grounded in the best of social science and breakthrough scientific discoveries. It will challenge the way Americans think about—and act on—the interrelated challenges of global health, poverty, climate change and ecosystem degradation. Problems, now perceived by the public to be disconnected, hopeless—or worse, harmless—will be seen as globally connected, solvable and urgent. Individuals will be inspired to become part of these solutions.

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**The result will be a measurably enlarged corps of globally minded U.S. citizens whose choices and actions accelerate progress towards a healthy and sustainable future.**

To deliver on this vision, *Strange Days 2020* has developed a strategy with the following goals:

- **Build awareness and understanding** using creative, attention-grabbing, entertaining storytelling tailored for mass audiences, using media vehicles with extensive reach.
- **Inspire action**, using research-based communications strategies that give viewers more than awareness: they will also receive *tools* to make informed decisions and easily accessible “on-ramps” to actions championed by *respected* change agents.
- **Maintain engagement**, by creating rewards and incentives for continued involvement, spreading the word and recruiting others.

#### **Building on a Winning Formula**

*Strange Days 2020* is built on a strong foundation of leading-edge filmmaking, innovative promotion and outreach strategies, and creative social change strategies to build stewardship, not just viewership. It makes creative use of integrated media, advanced communication technologies and powerful social networks.

#### ***Pioneering Filmmaking***

The first phase of *Strange Days 2020*, took place in 2004 with the PBS broadcast of *Strange Days on Planet Earth*. At the time, public interest in the environment was low and PBS was skeptical that any series could break through. Nevertheless, *Strange Days* beat the PBS primetime average ratings by 30% and won over audiences by incorporating all traditional components of a documentary—peer-reviewed science, proven facts and solid research—with the gripping story-line and fast-paced plot typically associated with films for mass audiences.

The result was an engaging series that held mass appeal for millions because it was exciting, engaging and informative. For its unusual approach and powerful storytelling, *Strange Days on Planet Earth* received fourteen international awards, including Best Series at Wildscreen<sup>®</sup>, the environmental equivalent of the Academy Awards<sup>®</sup>.

### ***Innovative Outreach and Promotion***

*Strange Days 2020* continues the tradition of innovative promotion and outreach strategies for which the original series became known.

Typical promotion campaigns focus on building *viewership*; *Strange Days on Planet Earth's* campaign promoted the issues, as well as the film, and focused on building *stewardship*. This approach proved very successful. Print coverage reached over 307 million individuals. Radio coverage was equally impressive: 2,222 stations and network affiliates aired 23 radio interviews more than 3,000 times, reaching more than 12 million listeners.

*Strange Days on Planet Earth's* outreach campaign was also issue-driven. It included:

- Engaging viewers in a citizen science initiative, a national volunteer network to combat invasive species;
- Providing tailored educational products for sixteen major informal science education institutions, zoos and aquariums;
- Working with eBay to adopt a policy banning the sales of invasive species;
- Applying the film's assets to the creation of short films that support specific initiatives.

### ***Audience Research***

*Strange Days 2020* targets three main U.S. audiences:

1. Intellectually curious, motivated learners (age 18-55) who are not actively engaged in environmental issues. These individuals are the primary audience. They tend to be involved in their communities, who stay abreast of current events, and who are potential change agents and messengers to larger audiences. They tend to be college-educated, motivated learners, with mid-to higher income<sup>1</sup>. They are predisposed to be concerned about global issues and become engaged in environmentally-friendly activities. They watch PBS regularly yet they are not "as engaged nor as participatory as they could be"<sup>2</sup>.

According to data in the National Marketing Institute *LOHAS*<sup>3</sup> *Consumer Trends Database*<sup>TM 4</sup> there is a discernible disconnect between stated concern for the environment and actual action on the part of the average PBS viewer. Many are looking for solutions and answers to the question, "What can I do?" they are also looking to be entertained. *Strange Days 2020* will draw on these findings and its own experience with the PBS audience to refine content and style so that it resonates strongly with this target audience.

## 2. U.S. college students

College students are a key subset of the primary audience. They were chosen because of their importance to future problem solving, as well as because of the opportunity to reach them effectively. Summative evaluations and viewer ratings of the first season of *Strange Days* confirmed that the series powerfully appealed to young adults, due to the combination of style, aesthetics, and the draw of celebrity host Edward Norton. Rising numbers of colleges and universities have embraced Earth System Science (ESS) curricula and suggest that the ESS approach, viewing Earth as an integrated whole, offers an engaging and valuable framework towards a more profound understanding of globally interconnected issues.<sup>5</sup>

## 3. Public opinion leaders and decision-makers

Decision-makers are often bombarded with information on global issues that lacks context and often focuses on symptoms rather than underlying causes. As such, many business and government decision-makers lack a big picture view of problems. This limits their understanding of how key issues are connected to other pressing needs and priorities.

## **Strange Days 2020 Elements**

At the heart of *Strange Days 2020* is the innovative use of traditional media elements, combined with new media products, formative research and testing.

### **1. Promotion and Outreach Campaigns**

Traditional promotion and earned media campaigns are designed primarily to grow viewership. Following the successful model of its first phase, *Strange Days 2020* will promote ideas; **it will target stewardship**. The campaign will reach the target audience with editorial features in long-lead publications, the mass media and the popular press. The star-power of Edward Norton will be used to attract attention to the issues, not just to attract viewers. Edward Norton has been chosen as a host for the series because of his popularity, as well as for his known commitment to a sustainable future.

*Strange Days 2020* will work with its partners in the non-governmental sphere, including educational organizations, informal science institutions, advocacy groups and issue campaigns (see Section 5). It will harness promotional opportunities through partner Websites, newsletters, events, community events and school groups. The focus will be on raising awareness, not simply attracting viewers.

1. PBS website [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org); [www.pvtalliance.org/auddata.html](http://www.pvtalliance.org/auddata.html)

2. Sea Studios Foundation proprietary study by the National Marketing Institute, 2006

3. LOHAS = Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability, NMI Consumer Trends Database, 2006

4. A consumer database of PBS viewers that offers in-depth insight into viewer attitudes, behavior, and product/service usage patterns across planetary health and wellness, sustainability, corporate social responsibility, environmentalism, and social issues. National Marketing Institute, December 2006, NMI Project 2616 for Sea Studios Foundation. Available upon request.

5. <http://esse21.usra.edu/ESSE21/>

All promotional efforts will employ viral social marketing techniques—self-propagating, web-based mechanisms for rapidly spreading ideas and messages.

## **2. Television Specials**

*Strange Days 2020* will build on its award-winning storytelling format to engage viewers around the vital connections between critical global issues.

Quarterly Television Specials “*Strange Days on Planet Earth*,” hosted by Edward Norton Broadcast nationally in prime time on PBS, each one hour special will bring a global and interconnected perspective on one spotlighted issue, with climate change, clean energy, poverty and disease as recurring central themes. The audience will become aware not only of the underlying research but the role that each of us plays in both the root cause of the problem and the solution. Pointers will drive viewers to PBS.com website for increased understanding and action.

### Quarterly Primetime *Strange Days 2020* Future Simulations

NMI’s research on public attitudes shows that Americans are more prone to take action when they believe that problems are not hopeless, that solutions really do exist, and that their actions can actually make a difference. *Strange Days 2020* introduces a new, 1-hour format to help viewers become engaged. The format builds on the pioneering techniques of the Fred Friendly<sup>6</sup> seminars and BBC World Debates<sup>7</sup>.

After the first *Strange Days* broadcast, viewers will be transported to a bright 2020 future in which the world successfully tackled the big problems exposed in the previous hour. They will join a dynamic group of thought-leaders who will be asked to identify the choices on the road to that future. Each episode will feature a guest moderator such as the NewsHour’s Judy Woodruff, Newsweek’s Fareed Zakaria, New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman, the Daily Show’s Jon Stewart and others. Audience participation will be encouraged with online chat rooms and YouTube video questions. Viewers will be urged to visit PBS.com and the companion site, [strangedays2020.org](http://strangedays2020.org), to enlist in a “Search for Solutions” that features a range of options for making a difference. The site will be equipped with most innovative means of tracking impact, “stickiness,” “linger” time and content-related activities.

## **3. Personally Targeted Digital Media**

Once people are motivated to act, the opportunity to engage them can be short-lived. To seize it, calls to action must be accompanied by accessible ways to become engaged.

In 2004, *Strange Days* created a popular website that offered an easy way to get information and to pledge action. This new approach to activism generated over 1 million visits, most of which resulted in some form of action.

6. <http://www.fredfriendly.org>

7. <http://www.bbcworld.com/Pages/Programme.aspx?id=47>

In 2008, *Strange Days 2020* will harness the opportunities of the rapidly evolving digital media world. The project's digital media portfolio—comprised of a PBS.org web site, a companion *Strange Days 2020* Website, video podcasts, web-based videos, and online competitions—will help viewers explore the issues and choose actions. The web sites will offer answers to the question “What can I do?” with a menu of diverse suggestions

A key magnet for participation will be the ongoing “Search for Solutions,” a product for the people, by the people. The online community will vote on which solutions are most likely to succeed, and these will organically rise to the surface. “Search for Solutions” will be promoted at the end of each TV broadcast and online video. It will feature quarterly competitions offering various prizes ranging from a *Strange Days* DVD set, a trip to join the filmmakers on location, a solar installation, a dream eco-expedition, or the opportunity to be featured on an upcoming online video.

Viewer participation will be encouraged: they will nominate or produce “best of” submissions in various categories – websites, action steps to make a difference, short videos explaining an issue, ways to stay abreast of issue without becoming overwhelmed, ways to make your voice heard, and so on. Most competitions will feature opportunities for users to rank their peers' submissions—similar to ranking systems employed on YouTube and Amazon.com

#### **4. Live Events and “meet-ups”**

Public events held at aquariums across the country during the first phase of *Strange Days* were well-attended and productive. *Strange Days 2020* will continue these events and will maximize their value by incorporating the results of its joint study with Yale University's School of Forestry on the efficacy of dialogue formats at public events. Full report on these findings is available upon request.

*Strange Days 2020* will partner with nonpartisan organizations with large virtual networks, such as the 100+ organizations that belong to the Connect US network, to inspire self-organized citizen events around the quarterly broadcasts. After pledging to hold an event, individuals would download “How To” kits with creative suggestions for making events fun, informative fact sheets, ideas for conversation topics, and “What You Can Do” handouts. Organizers and participants will be eligible for contests with donated prizes. *Strange Days 2020* will partner with college student-focused groups, including Americans for Informed Democracy and the Campus Climate Challenge, to provide specialized videos for these events.

#### **5. Forums with Decision-Makers and Thought Leaders**

The first phase of *Strange Days* experimented modestly with efforts to bring its unique lens to elected officials, with the signature event being a special screening requested and hosted by Senators John McCain and Joseph Lieberman.

*Strange Days 2020* will ramp up efforts to bring featured issues deeper into the discourse and debates of leading U.S. government officials, business executives, and opinion leaders. Special screenings and panel events will be hosted quarterly by nonpartisan organizations such as The Aspen Institute, The Brookings Institution, Center for Global Development, Center for Strategic & International Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Council on Foreign Relations, H. John Heinz III Center for Science, Economics and the Environment, New America Foundation, The Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security, World Affairs Council, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, World Business Council on Sustainable Development, and the World Economic Forum.

## **6. Products for Professional Communicators**

*Strange Days 2020* primary professional audience is comprised of educators and senior communications staff at institutions within a partner network (see Section 5.) *Strange Days 2020* will equip this group with practical tools and recommendations on how to engage their target audiences. Materials will include mini-versions of episodes, screening kits, activity guides, and other specialized materials to enhance their outreach capacity.

Additionally, *Strange Days 2020* will reach several hundred more professional educators and communicators outside of this network through:

- An electronic bulletin, *Insider's Guide to Strange Days: Practical Lessons for Global Issues Communicators*, that synthesizes lessons learned from the project's ongoing communications research and experience; and
- A set of workshops and presentations at major professional gatherings such as the annual Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) conference at which *Strange Days* project leaders will present lessons learned.

## **Moving People to Action**

There are many ways to engage individuals and mobilize them in a global community toward solving problems. Specific examples of how *Strange Days 2020* would affect different segments of the target audiences are included in Appendix I, The User Journey.

*Strange Days 2020* has a theory of change based on social science, integrated with solid audience research, media expertise and years of professional summative evaluation results. The following key assumptions are the foundation for the strategy and tactics of *Strange Days 2020*.

**The tipping point.** We subscribe to the “tipping point” notion of Malcolm Gladwell that the combined effort of multiple actors creates increasingly favorable conditions for a small number of actors or events to catalyze sudden change. We believe that a tipping point presently exists in public attitudes towards climate change, poverty alleviation, disease and conflict.

**The pivotal role of media.** We believe that media can play a pivotal role in accelerating tipping points by moving large numbers of people to undertake influential actions. While broadcast media has tended to be used mainly to inform, the evolving new media landscape offers opportunities to use media to move people *from passive viewership to active stewardship*. We plan for a synergistic and innovative use of traditional and new media.

**From awareness to action.** We subscribe to the basic Hungerford model of behavioral change<sup>8</sup>, which argues that an individual's willingness to undertake action depends on issue awareness plus understanding. We add several key refinements, and apply them to our media strategies:

- **Audience targeting.** Our media strategies are backed by audience research that goes beyond traditional polling and analyses about what people think, and includes research on *how* people think<sup>9</sup>.
- **Moving people to action.** Our strategies keep people moving from awareness towards action and never to leave them "hanging." A key enabler is providing environments supportive of their target audiences' interests and actions.
- **Informed judgments.** Our strategies empower individuals to make informed judgments and to direct energies towards significant actions.
- **Repeated exposures.** Key messages and frames are repeated throughout different media.
- **Reinforcing commitment.** We provide opportunities for deliberative dialogue and/or hands-on experience in working through an issue, which can help reinforce individuals' commitment to action. Excellent examples are user-generated content and citizen science models.
- **Support networks.** We offer opportunities to feel part of a larger community with common goals, which reinforces value of individual action.

8. Hungerford H.R. and T. Volk. 1990. Changing learner behavior through environmental education. *Journal of Environmental Education*. 21(3): 8-21.

9. Sea Studios staff has both commissioned or reviewed extensive meta-analyses on public opinion, cognitive experiments, media content analyses, and media-effects studies from: Valerie Knight Williams; The Frameworks Institute; Cultural Logic; Public Knowledge; Lake, Snell, Perry; Program on International Policy Attitudes; the Rockridge Institute; Greenberg, Quinlan, Rosner; Public Opinion Strategies; and research commissioned by the "Green Group," Global Interdependence Initiative, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and InterAction.

## 4. SUCCESS MEASUREMENT

*Strange Days on Planet Earth 2020* has been launched. The following strategic milestones reflect activities in progress and in the future. Each integrated media launch is anchored around a 1-hr TV special and also includes promotion, 1-hr future simulations, outreach, personally targeted digital media, live events and “meet-ups”, forums with decision-makers and thought leaders and products for professional communicators.

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### ***Year 1: in progress***

- Recruit an academic partner (in progress)
- Recruit a broadcast partner (in progress)
- Form a Board of Advisors (in progress)
- Expand NSF Council of Advisors (in progress)
- Lay out main themes and ideas (creative content) (in progress)
- Formative Research for episodes 5-8 (in progress)
- Secure funding for 50% of project (in progress)
- Begin production of episodes 5-8 (in progress)

### ***Year 2***

- Integrated media launch episodes 5-8 (quarterly)
- Secure funding for 75% of project
- Lay out main themes and ideas (creative 9-12)
- Formative Research for episodes 9-12
- Begin production of episodes 9-12
- Summative Evaluation of episodes 5-8

### ***Year 3***

- Integrated media launch episodes 9-12 (quarterly)
- Secure funding for 100% of project
- Lay out main themes and ideas (creative 13-16)
- Formative Research for episodes 13-16
- Begin production of episodes 13-16
- Summative Evaluation of episodes 9-12

#### **Year 4**

Integrated media launch episodes 13-16 (quarterly)

Secure funding for 100% of project

Lay out main themes and ideas (creative 17-20)

Formative Research for episodes 17-20

Begin production of episodes 17-20

Summative Evaluation of episodes 13-16

#### **Year 5**

Summative evaluation of episodes 13-16

Summative evaluation of episodes 17-20

### **Evaluation Methodology**

*Strange Days 2020* will rely on evaluation methodologies to test the efficacy of all project elements: television content and formats, online strategies, public events, and targeted efforts to reach opinion leaders and decision-makers. Preproduction, formative and summative evaluations will be used to analyze and fine-tune each element throughout the project's lifespan.

Progress measurement indicators include:

- Number of people reached through the promotional campaign;
- Number of viewers who watch *Strange Days* on PBS;
- Number of hits on the project Websites and number of downloads of *Strange Days* video Podcasts;
- Number of individuals who take part in or organize live events;
- Evidence of evaluated viewers' increased understanding of core concepts for issue literacy on featured issue(s);
- Percentage of evaluated viewers who demonstrate sustained improvements in understanding three months after series viewing;
- Number of Website visits to action-oriented items such as downloadable guides to "What I can do";
- Number of people involved in hands-on learning activities, including online "search for solutions" contests and in-person citizen science program;
- Number of people who come to live events, the quality of their feedback, and their stated forecast for personal action;
- Number of people who follow through on action commitments three months after live events;
- Number and quality of attendees at special screenings and live events for decision-makers;
- Quality of their feedback regarding the relevance and utility of the film and events to their work;
- Unsolicited feedback received from decision-makers who view the series;
- Quality of evaluation feedback from partner institutions and expert communicators on the utility and effectiveness of *Strange Days* tools provided.

## **Evaluation Team**

To push the traditional frontiers of media evaluation, we have assembled a team of three veteran media evaluation groups—Knight-Williams Research Communications, Public Knowledge LLC, and Cultural Logic—to draw on complementary expertise in a variety of rigorous quantitative and qualitative methods. The team will assess the immediate effects and lasting impacts on audience awareness, understanding and willingness to take action.

## 5. STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Many groups are already making significant headway in engaging Americans in the search for solutions to climate change, health issues and poverty alleviation. Sea Studios Foundation approaches its role within this larger ecosystem of change agents with humility, seeking to play a catalytic and complementary—not duplicative—role that accelerates existing momentum. We view the following strategic partnerships as critical for this endeavor.

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### **Broadcast partners**

*Strange Days 2020* has chosen PBS as its main distribution partner because a large set of our intended audience of motivated learners and potential doers already watches PBS regularly. PBS programming is freely available to every American household with a television set. It is one of the most powerful national information distribution channels, with approximately 90 million viewers each week. PBS offers a creative editorial space for the development of programming that will captivate and motivate this audience.

### **Funding partners**

These include like-minded philanthropic institutions, major corporations and individuals with demonstrated commitment to advancing progress on global challenges. Major partners currently include The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, National Science Foundation, and ITT Corporation.

### **Advisors**

*Strange Days 2020* is a global initiative with impacts across geographical, political and scientific boundaries. We seek to recruit a board of thought leaders whose demonstrated vision and passion for change will propel the initiative forward.

- **Board of Advisors**—An Advisory Board will monitor the overall direction of the initiative and help set direction year over year. For a list of invitees, please see attachment.
- **Council of Advisors**—The council will have experts in the areas of Content, Strategy, Media and Advocacy. Each *Strange Days* episode has been developed under the guidance and scrutiny of an advisory group of nationally regarded experts. *Strange Days 2020* will continue to assemble expert advisory groups around specialized topics to inform the content of all media products, and to help enhance all complementary impact and outreach efforts.

## **Outreach and Impact Partners**

*Strange Days 2020* will partner with leading nonpartisan networks that bring together multiple groups around the issues it highlights. Contacts have already been established with Connect US (a network of hundreds of U.S.-based groups); the Green Group of approximately 30 CEOs of U.S. environmental groups; Interaction, a coalition of over 150 organizations focused on the world's poor and most vulnerable and Americans for Informed Democracy, a nonpartisan student group that has already organized events involving over 100,000 university students.

*Strange Days 2020* will continue long-standing partnerships with eight informal education institutions— the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach, California, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum in Tucson, Chicago's Shedd Aquarium, Louisiana's Aquarium of the Americas, Florida Aquarium, Boston's New England Aquarium, New York Aquarium. It will engage The Ocean Project (TOP), a network of 600 aquariums, zoos, museums, and conservation organizations.

## **Academic Partners**

*Strange Days 2020* will work with a select group of academic institutions with a demonstrated commitment to a sustainable future. Sea Studios Foundation has existing relationships with these institutions.

- Stanford's Woods Institute for Environment and Sustainability
- Columbia University's Earth Institute (Jeffrey Sachs)
- Harvard Medical School's Center for Health and Global Environment
- Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
- Yale's Institute for Biospheric Studies

## 6. BUDGET

### ANNUAL PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY Strange Days 2020 Initiative

Description	SubClass	Description	Budget	SUBTOTALS	Totals
<b>TOTAL STRATEGIC PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT &amp; FUND.</b>				\$ 627,989	\$ 627,989
<b>TOTAL ADVISORY BOARD</b>				\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000

#### TELEVISION PRODUCTION-- STRANGE DAYS ON PLANET EARTH 4X 1 HOUR EPISODES/YEAR

Pre-Production				\$ 22,750	
Production					
	Production Staff		723,456		
	Host		123,735		
	Domestic Shoots		159,510		
	International Shoots		334,495		
	Recreations		147,935		
	Natural History		217,635		
	Animation		120,500		
	Stock		149,000		
<b>TOTAL PRODUCTION</b>				\$ 1,976,266	
Post-Production					
	Offline		274,300		
	Online/Packaging		455,860		
<b>TOTAL POST-PRODUCTION</b>				\$ 730,160	
<b>TOTAL STRANGE DAYS PRODUCTION</b>					\$ 2,729,176

#### TELEVISION PRODUCTION-- 4 X 1 OUR FUTURE SCENARIO

			Episodes per Year	
Pre-Production				\$ 15,000
Production				
	Production Staff		\$270,000	
	Host/Guests		\$200,000	
	Venue		\$100,000	
	3 Camera Shoot		\$200,000	
	Graphics/Titles		\$50,000	
	Logistics/Travel		\$100,000	
<b>TOTAL PRODUCTION</b>				\$920,000
Post-Production				
	Offline Edit		80,000	
	Packaging		40,000	
<b>TOTAL POST-PRODUCTION</b>				\$ 120,000
<b>SUBTOTAL FUTURE SCENARIO PRODUCTION</b>				\$ 1,055,000
<b>LESS REVENUES GENERATED FROM TICKET SALES</b>				\$ 100,000
<b>TOTAL FUTURE SCENARIO PRODUCTION</b>				\$ 955,000

#### SOCIAL CAMPAIGN AND OUTREACH

	Outreach Staff		199,214	
	Websites		140,000	
	Outreach Products		173,000	
	Outreach Programs		104,600	
	Logistics and Admin		45,500	
	Citizen Science		99,500	
<b>TOTAL SOCIAL CAMPAIGN AND OUTREACH</b>			\$ 761,814	\$ 761,814

#### PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

	Public Relations		223,971	
	Promo Design		25,500	
	Promo Staff		183,487	
	Events		57,000	
<b>TOTAL PUBLICITY &amp; PROMOTION</b>			\$ 489,958	\$ 489,958

#### RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

	Formative		75,500	
	Summative		108,000	
<b>TOTAL RESEARCH &amp; EVALUATION</b>			\$ 183,500	\$ 183,500

#### STAFF, OVERHEAD AND INSURANCE

<b>ABOVE THE LINE STAFF</b>			\$ 990,962	
<b>INSURANCE</b>			\$ 105,000	
<b>ALLOCATIONS</b>			\$ 311,784	
<b>TOTAL</b>				\$ 1,407,746

<b>PROJECT SUBTOTAL</b>	\$ 7,175,183
<b>PROJECT RECOUPMENT</b>	\$ 280,238
<b>PROJECT FEE (5% of Project Subtotal)</b>	\$ 358,759
<b>CONTINGENCY (5% Prod, 5% Outreach)</b>	\$ 222,300
<b>INDIRECT (6.5% of Project Subtotal)</b>	\$ 466,387
<b>PROJECT TOTALS</b>	\$ 8,502,867
	<b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>

## 7. APPENDIX I

### The User Journey

#### *The college student*

Sara, a young surfer at University of California-Santa Cruz, hears from a friend about a Podcast hosted by Edward Norton on “something we’re doing to the ocean that blew his mind.” Sara goes to iTunes, watches the 7-minute Podcast, and learns that the carbon dioxide causing global warming is also making the ocean more acidic—threatening coral reefs and other key parts of the food chain. Moved by the film and Norton’s call to join the “search for solutions”, Sara visits the suggested url—[www.search4solutions.org](http://www.search4solutions.org)—and finds out about a contest to create the best film under five minutes to explain “acidification” and present solutions. The top prize is particularly exciting-- a solar energy installation and other green building retrofits for one of her school’s buildings.

Sara tells the editor of the school’s daily newspaper about the contest and he writes an article it. Several hundred readers go online to watch the podcast, visit the site and read the contest rules; many are drawn to related podcasts and issues, then choose the “invite a friend” option to tell others about the site. Rich, a student at the University of Texas, is one of the friends who receive such an invite. An expert in flash animation, but unaware of the acidification issue, Rich enters the contest. While producing the film, he visits scores of websites and showcases the best ideas and action sites. Rich emails hundreds of friends to urge them to cast a vote for his video on the *Strange Days* website. Within days, hundreds, then thousands of young people around the country get involved with the project, watch the video and comment on the content. Sara has, in fact, become the hub of a network that explodes far beyond her own campus.

Two months later, Rich is chosen as one of five finalists. Rich and his dorm-mates attend a screening party organized by campus chapter of Americans for Informed Democracy (AID), to view the program’s live broadcast announcing the winner. Rich wins, which leads to a flurry of campus press on the issue. Scores of students that attended the AID event sign on to a campaign that solidifies support for the University to sign the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment. A team Sara pulled together wins second place, with the consolation of being featured in a future podcast episode hosted by Edward Norton. Governor Schwarzenegger surprises Sara with a congratulatory phone call and offer of his staff’s time to help UC- Santa Cruz explore the full range of green building upgrades.

Sara, Rich and hundreds of their friends are hooked: they subscribe to the iTunes Podcast series; visit the *Strange Days* site often to blog, vote in new contests, take suggested action steps; and continue to spread the word. Sara joins the Surfrider Foundation, which she discovered through *Strange Days*, to help protect the ocean. Rich and others join groups as diverse as the One campaign, DATA, Environmental Defense, Conservation International, and Vote Solar.

One phone call has engaged thousands of young people to become involved in solutions for a sustainable living.

### ***The Decision maker***

Carlos is a busy U.S. Senate Legislative Assistant working on global poverty. He receives an intriguing 1-minute e-mail -“video invitation” to attend a screening and panel discussion around an upcoming episode of *Strange Days*, hosted by the Center for Global Development in Washington DC.

During the film, Carlos is intrigued by the story of Wangari Maathai, whose Green Belt Movement in Kenya is bringing clean water, job opportunities, and more productive soils to poor people. A story about Jane Goodall’s “smart stoves” opens his eyes to problems caused by indoor air pollution from burning wood in poor countries, such as respiratory disease. He learns about alternatives to keep people healthy, keep the forests intact, and reduce global warming. The remarks of the well-credentialed panel of experts further pique his interest.

The next day, Carlos returns to his office and finds an email from Sea Studios and Center for Global Development, which thanks him for participating in the meeting and provides links to an online summary and related short videos. Carlos forwards the email to several colleagues on the Hill. One of the recipients, Amy, is a staffer for the House Committee on International Relations. After viewing the videos, Amy contacts Sea Studios to explore the possibility of a special screening event on the Hill. Two months later, Amy organizes an event that is co-hosted by a Republican and Democratic member. Following the event, Amy creates a weekly breakfast meeting for Hill staffers on global poverty-environment links, which ultimately inspires a several hearings and ideas for the overseas development assistance budget that will advance progress on multiple global issues simultaneously.

### ***The Stay-at-home Mom***

Laurie, an attorney in Seattle, recently left her law firm to stay at home with her 2-year old son Aidan and spend more time with her teenage daughter Lucy. One morning Laurie catches an interview on the *Today* show with Edward Norton, who mentions his upcoming PBS mystery television special that sounds like something Lucy would like. Laurie finds out that Lucy is a huge Norton fan. They make a date to watch the show together.

Lucy, an aspiring veterinarian, is moved by a story about how the salmon she grew up watching on summer vacations in Idaho, now barely make it back to their home rivers to spawn. She learns that current methods of generating energy are a major culprit: hydroelectric dams impede the journey salmon need to make to reproduce; global warming complicates matters further by reducing the amount of water in rivers when salmon most need it. Laurie, meanwhile, is startled by a story on the mercury in fish—an issue she first learned about when pregnant with her son; what Laurie hadn’t realized was that the coal-fired power plants fueling global warming are also a huge source of the mercury that end up poisoning fish.

Having seen a connection between energy and other issues they care about, Lucy and her mom spend the following weekend creating a MySpace page to encourage elected officials to take stronger action on global warming and alternatives to dams that harm salmon. Their MySpace page includes a links to related *Strange Days* podcasts, as well as to several organizations like The Nature Conservancy and Save Our Wild Salmon that Lucy and Laurie discovered through visiting the *Strange Days* website. Lucy and Laurie’s page ends up encouraging over 1,000 individuals to send messages of support to elected officials, a large subset of whom visit the *Strange Days* website and are inspired to find their own unique ways to contribute to solutions.

## 8. APPENDIX II

### Evaluation Plan

In order to help Sea Studios and the Strange Days project make the most of an extraordinary platform, Sea Studios is commissioning a White Paper and accompanying workshop offering guidance on communicating the topic at the heart of the effort:

*How natural systems function as the mechanism for Interconnections (between the human and natural spheres, between societies, between parts of the world, between issue domains)*

Ultimately, Strange Days seeks to establish a new public “vocabulary” (verbal and conceptual) that helps American citizens and leaders create a focused and constructive conversation on this critical but challenging topic.

In order to do so, Strange Days plans to take advantage of the best in current communications research from both traditional and innovative perspectives, from the field of public opinion research to the cognitive and social sciences. A guiding assumption of the project is that, beyond caring about people and about the planet, understanding the connections that interweave the human and natural spheres will allow the public to take greater responsibility for the shared fates of both, and to become more deeply engaged with the issues. Strategists familiar with ambitious communications efforts on related topics can provide critical guidance on the best ways of conveying this understanding.

Topos is the ideal organization to provide this type of formative input and evaluation, given its integrative perspective, its commitment to increasing public understanding as a way of empowering and motivating people, and its collective expertise in both the relevant research disciplines and issue areas.

The White Paper and Workshop will be informed by previous research (by Topos members and others) on public understanding of topics like the following:

- How the environment is relevant to human experience
- How human experience affects natural systems
- How the ocean in particular is relevant to human experience
- How “different” natural systems (weather, ocean, soil, etc.) are connected
- How different societies’ concerns are connected
- How different domains, or concerns, are connected (e.g. economy and health, agriculture and environment)

While not all of these areas have been well explored in previous research, the Topos team is well positioned to pull together the important findings that are available, and to draw helpful lessons that will offer the best guides to creating an effective “lens” on this critical topic. Therefore, in addition to summarizing research concerning what is already known about the American public’s interdependent connections (as outlined above), this analysis will also include lessons concerning the ways in which different communications approaches assist or interfere with interdependent thinking.

## 9. APPENDIX III

### About Sea Studios Foundation

Sea Studios Foundation is a non-profit team of award-winning filmmakers, respected scientists and thought leaders who work together to raise public involvement in solving the major threats to our planet's health today. We are dedicated to raising awareness of all the ways human life is entwined with the natural environment, and expose the complex web of connections of Earth's life support systems. We believe that lasting solutions will demand an informed, engaged public as well as government and business leadership. In all our work we rely on cutting edge social science research and extensive scientific and public opinion research. We work with a vast network of collaborators, and rigorously evaluate everything we do.

The Foundation has received international acclaim for two recent projects, produced for PBS in collaboration with the National Geographic Society: *The Shape of Life*, a primer for understanding the evolution of the animal kingdom and animal biodiversity ([www.pbs.org/shapeoflife](http://www.pbs.org/shapeoflife)); and *Strange Days on Planet Earth*, hosted by Academy-award nominee Edward Norton and dedicated to bringing Earth sciences to life and raising awareness of the ways human life is entwined with the Earth's life support systems. Both initiatives were praised for the quality of their science-based content, style, storytelling and pioneering techniques in underwater and deep-sea filmmaking. Both initiatives had integrated massive audience participation and were the beginning of a wave of related audience activities.

When it debuted in April 2004, *Strange Days* featured four hours of prime time television on PBS and an extensive national outreach campaign. All the project's components were firmly grounded in the burgeoning field of Earth System Science (ESS)—a pioneering, multidisciplinary approach to studying the environment rooted in the concept of interconnectedness. Through all its products, *Strange Days* revealed a new, integrated picture of Earth—one that exposed the links between seemingly isolated phenomena, events, and processes of the planet and helped audiences to grasp the significance of how local actions can lead to global impacts. In doing so, it helped rejuvenate public interest in the environment both qualitatively and quantitatively. For example, the first broadcast of the PBS series reached 11.8 million viewers, and achieved a 30% increase over PBS primetime average among viewers 18 to 55 years old. Summative analysis by an independent evaluation firm revealed that viewers, when appraising the series elements, style, educational value, and motivation to take action, rated the programs 6.0 out of 7.0. Senators John McCain and Joseph Lieberman hosted a special event on Capitol Hill featuring a *Strange Days* screening to help galvanize support for global climate change legislation. Working behind the scenes, the initiative worked with eBay to help curb the trafficking of invasive species, and it launched a citizen science program in three states to help diminish the spread of invasive plants and animals.<sup>2</sup>

*Strange Days on Planet Earth* is the recipient of fourteen international awards, including Wildscreen, the environmental equivalent of the Academy Awards®.