

# Digital sobriety for a greener web

The website at the heart of a new sustainability-focused initiative for young people is built according to the principles of digital sobriety. **Léa Nogier** (France Télévisions) explains what that means.

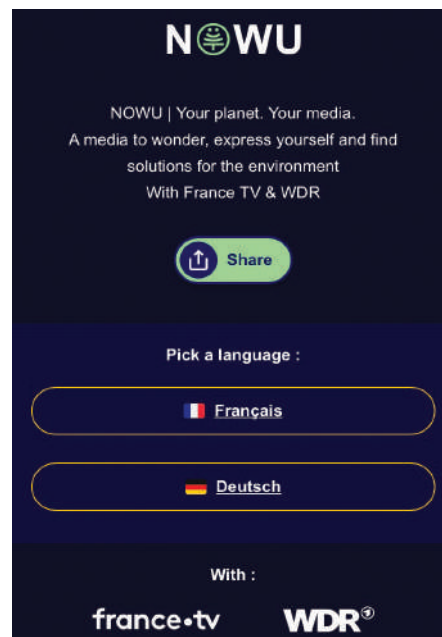
Digital technology is responsible for a growing share of energy consumption. In France, the digital sector accounts for 2.5% of greenhouse gas emissions and consumes around 10% of the country's electricity. For this reason, when France Télévisions and the German broadcaster WDR launched a new sustainability-focused initiative targeting 15- to 25-year-olds, the mobile-first web platform was designed to minimize the energy it consumed, and therefore its environmental footprint.

Two-thirds of young Europeans rank the climate emergency as the top priority to be addressed by the EU. Aiming to further raise awareness of environmental issues among young people and to help them take action, NOWU is the new platform created by the two broadcasters. Launched in September 2021, it has been built according to the principles of 'digital sobriety'. A concept originally developed by a French think tank called The Shift Project, digital sobriety promotes using the internet and technology in a more mindful and responsible way as opposed to cutting it out entirely.

## TWO MAIN PRINCIPLES

In building the NOWU website ([nowuproject.eu](https://nowuproject.eu)), the team followed two main principles: have no superfluous features and make the remaining elements as light as possible. This meant limiting the use of external scripts, compressing the code, and using light technologies and what's known as lazy loading (only initializing a web object when it is needed, rather than loading it as soon as the site is opened).

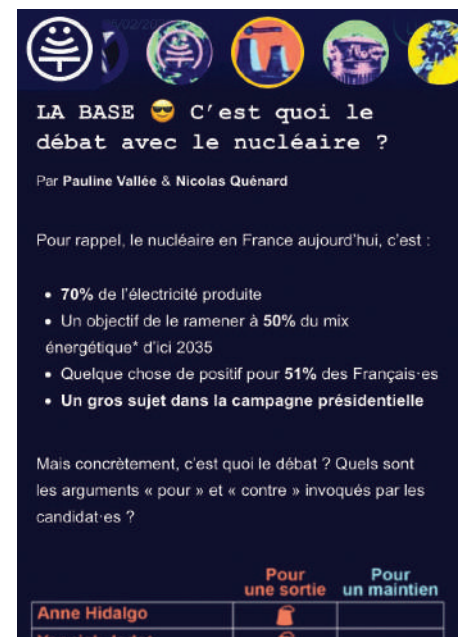
On NOWU you won't find video, infinite scrolling or embedded third-party elements such as tweets, YouTube videos, Instagram posts,



etc. Furthermore, all images published on the site are compressed so as not to exceed a 50 kb limit. This is about 60 times lighter than a photo taken with a smartphone.

To measure the carbon impact of the digital platform, NOWU uses a solution called GreenFrame, which provides end-to-end data on the energy impact for each functional modification on the website. It models the impacts from the client workstation (browser) to the product's architectural back end (database, web servers, network).

On the NOWU project, the digital sobriety approach also includes an ethical dimension:



[nowuproject.eu](https://nowuproject.eu) does not collect any data on its users. This avoids the need for a heavy, energy-intensive analytics tool that would run permanently on the site.

With NOWU, France Télévisions and WDR took up the challenge to launch a new digital destination and offer young Europeans the experience of a more sober and eco-designed digital platform that combines raising awareness of the issues they care about with reducing resource consumption and their own carbon impact.

Find more data on NOWU's digital sobriety approach in this blog post: <https://tinyurl.com/ftv-digital-sobriety>

The French and German teams behind NOWU, a European project, are seeking additional public service media organizations to join it in 2022. With an optimistic and guilt-free tone, NOWU's content is divided into three main areas: content to ACT, content to BE INFORMED, and content to GET INSPIRED.

Every day, NOWU publishes an interactive and useful article, always proposing solutions. How to check the eco-responsibility of clothes thanks to the label? Are electric cars really a solution? What is the debate on nuclear power? How to convince your friends to avoid flying this summer? To learn more and discuss joining the the project, contact:

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