

# The Evolution of Peak Oil Coverage

Bart Anderson  
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# Problem

- Little awareness of peak oil
- Media, government, industry uninterested
- Nowhere to publish
- Few ways to communicate

# Beginnings (~2004)

1. Pioneers - Hubbert, Odum, Campbell
2. Books - Simmons, Kunstler, Heinberg, Goodstein, Deffeyes
3. A few media mentions
4. Early sites - Peakoil.com, Energy Bulletin, LATOC, Lundberg
5. Rep. Roscoe Bartlett, Queensland MP Andrew McNamara

# Progress (~2006)

1. ASPO-USA, The Oil Drum, Post Carbon
2. Personal blogs, new writers
3. Documentaries ("The End of Suburbia")
4. Government Reports (Hirsch, GAO)
5. Media interest, but little depth. Cleveland *Plain Dealer* series on energy and peak oil.

# Going mainstream (~2008)

1. Books, documentaries, websites
2. Hundreds, thousands of new writers
3. Investors pick up on "peak oil"
4. Regular coverage and mention of peak oil, especially in the financial press
5. Spike in prices

# Success?

- 4,380,000 hits on Google for "peak oil"
- Interest from industry and governments (especially local)
- Local groups (Transition Towns, Post Carbon outposts)

# Continuing

- Monitor
- Lobby - "The well-oiled peak oil PR machine"
- Critique energy technologies - EROEI, biofuels, unconventional oil
- Work with media and allies (investors, planners, environmentalists)

# What we've done right

- Networked, non-hierarchical
- Non-partisan, all over the spectrum
- Volunteers do what they can
- Welcoming
- Stimulating, constant stream of content ("like an ongoing graduate seminar")

# Limitations

- Volunteer
- Limited to informing and persuading
- Technical orientation
- Narrow demographic: professionals - men - English-speaking + Europe
- Cultural

# What's next?

1. Other trends
2. Other resources
3. Other voices
4. Culture change

# Other trends

- Climate
- Politics (national and geopolitical)
- Economics
- Food and agriculture
- Urban design and transportation

We do have to do something about the energy problem. I can tell you that nothing has really taken me aback more as secretary of State than the way that the politics of energy is -- I will use the word warping -- diplomacy around the world.

Condoleeza Rice  
U.S. Secretary of State

# Other resources

- Fossil fuels (natural gas, coal, uranium)
- Minerals (phosphorus)
- Water, eco-systems

# Other voices

- China, India, Africa, South America, Middle East
- Women
- Farmers, blue collar workers, small business, artists

# Culture Change

- The age of fossil fuels saw the rise of experimental science, capitalism, socialism, consumerism.
- It seems impossible to make a transition to a sustainable civilization with our present worldview.
- With turmoil will come new philosophies, new religions, new insights, new ways of life.

Everything you know is wrong

Firesign Theater

Those nations and organizations — including our church — that change their thinking and their behavior will thrive. Those that cannot, or won't, will not survive in the ways they should.

Rev. Richard Cizik

National Association of Evangelicals

## **A predicament, not a problem**

... a *problem* calls for a solution; the only question is whether a solution can be found and made to work and, once this is done, the problem is solved.

A *predicament*, by contrast, has no solution. Faced with a predicament, people come up with responses. Those responses may succeed, they may fail, or they may fall somewhere in between, but none of them “solves” the predicament, in the sense that none of them makes it go away.

John Michael Greer  
*The Long Descent*