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Data Journalism

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Final Project Memo

**1. Summary**

**Are fashion companies adopting more sustainable policies after COP26?**

Glasgow’s supranational climate summit COP26 has become a marker in time to delineate what big players in the world are taking action to stall the effects of the climate crisis. It’s widely known that the fashion industry is one the biggest polluters in the world, and some of the companies that represent these industries were present at this initiative. Six months onward from COP26, can we track if these companies have made any process in becoming more eco-friendly? \*The companies that will be tracked must be have US headquarters.

**2. Why Important**

In 2018, the global fashion industry produced [2.1 billion metric tons](https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/fashion-on-climate) — the same amount of greenhouse gas produced by Germany, the UK, and France, combined. The [UNFCCC](https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/fashion-for-global-climate-action) has previously underscored the fashion industry as one of the top emitters, and the necessity to align the industry with the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In Fall 2021, the updated UN Fashion Charter signed at COP26 became the acting legal document that binds the top fashion label signatories to comply with guidelines that will keep global emissions below a 1.5-degree increase. If signatories deviate from this agreement, their emissions can seriously jeopardize the health of the planet.

**3. Benefit of Data**

Beyond typical numerical emissions rates, data is required for this story to turn in relatively subjective data into tangible units that can be used to disseminate which American fashion corporations are holding themselves accountable to the amended UN Fashion Charter signed at COP26, and which are falling short of their promises. By the time this story has written, COP26 will have happened only 6 months ago. Because of this, data matriculation can exclusively produce a side-by-side comparison of how these companies have performed since COP26, and comparing that to the respective months of the previous fiscal year.

**4. People Sources**

* Lobbyists in DC advocating on behalf of climate conscious clothing production.
* PR Representatives from one of the top fashion companies
* Representatives from EPA/DOEE (I have a contact in the DOEE)

**5. Lasting Impact on Readers**

* **The Element of Surprise:** While fast fashion is consistently referenced as a buzzword term, consumers may be surprised to know that brands who they thought had made such sweeping statements might not be as eco-conscious as they are making themselves out to be.
* **Consumers Demand with Dollars:** The most effective way for consumers to grass-roots take a stand against fashion conglomerates producing too many emissions, are to deviate their funds elsewhere. When consumers withhold dollars that would be spent towards fashion labels with enormous climate footprints, they can redirect their money towards labels that are more eco-conscious, sustainably made, and abide to human rights practices.
* **In-tune with global climate action:** Many consumers who buy fast fashion become jaded with hearing about the climate crisis because they feel like they can’t make a difference with their individual actions. I’d hope this piece will draw attention to the fact that consumers can maintain awareness with global emissions, but also take individual eco-conscious’s actions that will amount to a collective difference.

**6. Non-data Research**

* 1. Each company separately publishes month by month and year end reports of their emissions. These reports can be compared.
* 2. The EPA and the DOEE have taken great stances against fast fashion and the negative contribution it has made to our society. Both of these organizations harbor emissions data available upon request.

**7. Extra Data Sources**

* The greatest flaw in this analysis is that most of the top US fashion companies outsource to other countries. This makes it extremely difficult to know whether or not their emissions reports are severely underreported, especially if they are producing emissions in countries where emissions reporting is not necessary. Basically, I wish I had total emissions produced by the top fashion companies across the world, as this would make a more accurate story.