

MOOC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

4.4 Eco-citizen: being well informed to make informed choices

Auteurs :

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Activity 10: Eco-citizen: being well informed to make informed choices

5G is a subject of great tension between "pro" and "anti" 5G because it is a central technology in the development of a digital future. For some, it is indispensable and unavoidable, for others it is useless, futile and even dangerous. Indeed, from the imaginary of a digital future making our cities more ecological, safer and more pleasant to that of a future of widespread surveillance and manipulation, destructive of life and social relations, multiple visions are possible. What truths? What lies? What doubts?

In order to create a society, we must think on the basis of solid, verified information. In the digital age, the best and the worst information circulates, and this is at the heart of the debates that are igniting the 5G!

Capsule slide	Related text
<p>When 5G sets minds on fire!</p> <p>In 2021, the 5G, a new generation of mobile phones, landed in France. 5G technology will provide access to far more than 4G throughputs, with very short latency times and high reliability, while increasing the number of simultaneous connections per area covered [1].</p> <p>These technical prowess raise the enthusiasm of some, others denounce risks to the environment, health and democracy. Between the rush of policies and the time needed for research, the debate rages in the media, on social networks...</p> <p>Source : [1] : 5G, features, Wikipedia</p> 	<p>When 5G sets minds on fire!</p> <p>In 2021, the 5G, a new generation of mobile phones, landed in France. 5G technology will provide access to far more than 4G throughputs, with very short latency times and high reliability, while increasing the number of simultaneous connections per area covered [1].</p> <p>These technical prowess raise the enthusiasm of some, others denounce risks to the environment, health and democracy. Between the rush of policies and the time needed for research, the debate rages in the media, on social networks...</p> <p>Source : [1] : 5G, caractéristiques, Wikipedia</p>
<p>True or False?</p> <p>True or False?</p> <p>It's not always obvious to untangle the true of the fake! Especially that sometimes the answer doesn't exist yet!</p> <p>We will offer you a dozen sentences on 5G. For each of them, say whether, in your opinion, it is true, false or if we don't have the answer...</p>	<p>True or False?</p> <p>It's not always obvious to untangle the true of the fake! Especially that sometimes the answer doesn't exist yet!</p> <p>We will offer you a dozen sentences on 5G. For each of them, say whether, in your opinion, it is true, false or if we don't have the answer..</p>

1 / 12 True or False?

As a first step, 5G is mainly intended for companies.

The 5G is currently deployed to the general public, with strong publicity encouraging the purchase of a new mobile phone and a 5G package. For the time being, the increased flow rate does not bring much to users, as the press in the pioneer countries shows.

The real promises of 5G hold more in the time of extremely reduced latency and the standardisation of communications protocols for the Internet of Things. These technical characteristics are primarily of interest to the industry because they offer the possibility of optimising logistics, making the organisation of factories more flexible, developing robotisation, etc. We talk about *factories of the future*.

Sources :

[Tour du monde des réseaux mobiles 5G : les particuliers ne sont pas conquis, Le Monde, 09/2020](#)

[À quoi sert la 5G ? Martin Koppe, Journal du CNRS, 01/2021](#)

[Qu'est-ce que la 5G ? Neuf réponses pour tout savoir, Le Figaro, 03/2021](#)

1 / 12

True, False or We don't know?

As a first step, 5G is mainly intended for companies => TRUE

Feedback

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Capsule slide	Related text
<p data-bbox="170 126 409 170">2 / 12 True or False?</p> <p data-bbox="170 228 682 264">5G will drive an industrial revolution</p> <p data-bbox="170 305 1117 472">5G is presented by policies as an issue of economic strategy, international competition. It would be the pillar of the 4th industrial revolution after those of coal, oil, electricity and computer science. The technical promises are there, but in reality nothing is operational yet. The government has launched a call for projects and telecom operator Orange has opened 9 "5G" labs to help companies develop products and services based on this technology. For the time being, this is a question of a will on the part of politicians and economic actors.</p> <p data-bbox="170 537 659 610">Sources : La France en quête d'usages pour la 5G, Le Figaro, 02/2021 Les bénéfices de la 5G, Orange</p>	<p data-bbox="1220 126 1604 188">2 / 12 True, False or We don't know?</p> <p data-bbox="1220 228 1955 264">5G will drive an industrial revolution => "WE DON'T KNOW"</p> <p data-bbox="1220 302 1350 329">Feedback</p> <p data-bbox="1220 363 2003 751">5G is presented by policies as an issue of economic strategy, international competition. It would be the pillar of the 4th industrial revolution after those of coal, oil, electricity and computer science. The technical promises are there, but in reality nothing is operational yet. The government has launched a call for projects and telecom operator Orange has opened 9 "5G" labs to help companies develop products and services based on this technology. For the time being, this is a question of a will on the part of politicians and economic actors.</p> <p data-bbox="1220 824 1913 922">Sources : La France en quête d'usages pour la 5G, Le Figaro, 02/2021 Les bénéfices de la 5G, Orange [consultées le : 03/01/2022]</p>
<p data-bbox="170 979 409 1023">3 / 12 True or False?</p> <p data-bbox="170 1068 892 1141">By 2025, there will be 50 billion connected objects worldwide.</p>	<p data-bbox="1220 979 1604 1040">3 / 12 True, False or We don't know?</p> <p data-bbox="1220 1081 1871 1143">By 2025, there will be 50 billion connected objects worldwide => "WE DON'T KNOW"</p> <p data-bbox="1220 1183 1350 1211">Feedback</p> <p data-bbox="1220 1248 1982 1357">Almost non-existent ten years ago, the number of connected objects increased by 10 % per year to reach 19 billion in 2020. The potential applications are multiple (smart cities,</p>

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<p>Almost non-existent ten years ago, the number of connected objects increased by 10 % per year to reach 19 billion in 2020. The potential applications are multiple (smart cities, agriculture, telemedicine, wearables, industry, e-commerce, autonomous vehicles, home automation) and “make appetite for digital giants”.</p> <p>As we have seen, the 5G standards are designed to meet the needs of these applications. Studies have made projections to estimate the number of connected objects worldwide in 2025. According to the GreenIT report, this could indeed be 50 billion, a little less for G. Roussille, which still confirms the trend.</p> <p>But it is only an estimate and it will of course depend on our collective choices.</p> <p>Sources : Empreinte environnementale du numérique mondial, GreenIT.fr, Frédéric Bordage, 09/2019 La controverse de la 5G, Gauthier Roussille, 08/2020</p>	<p>agriculture, telemedicine, wearables, industry, e-commerce, autonomous vehicles, home automation) and “make appetite for digital giants”.</p> <p>As we have seen, the 5G standards are designed to meet the needs of these applications. Studies have made projections to estimate the number of connected objects worldwide in 2025. According to the GreenIT report, this could indeed be 50 billion, a little less for G. Roussille, which still confirms the trend.</p> <p>But it is only an estimate and it will of course depend on our collective choices.</p> <p>Sources : Empreinte environnementale du numérique mondial, GreenIT.fr, Frédéric Bordage, 09/2019 La controverse de la 5G, Gauthier Roussille, 08/2020 [consultés le : 03/01/2022]</p>
<div data-bbox="170 854 1087 1039" style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 10px;"> <p>4 / 12 True or False?</p> <p>The development of autonomous cars will reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions.</p> </div> <p>Feedback</p>	<p>4 / 12 True, False or We don't know?</p> <p>The development of autonomous cars will reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions => “WE DON'T KNOW”</p> <p>Feedback</p> <p>The answer to this essential question is not obvious to date. On the one hand, electric motorisation and automatic driving should have a positive impact. But if you do a life cycle analysis, it's less clear. The gray energy used to make an electric vehicle is more important than for a conventional</p>

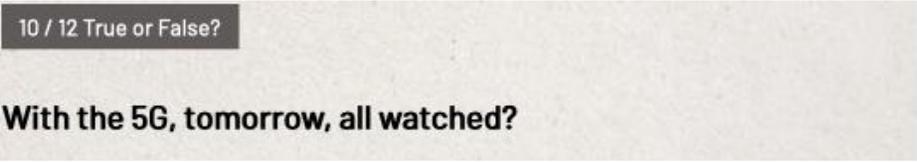
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<p>The answer to this essential question is not obvious to date. On the one hand, electric motorisation and automatic driving should have a positive impact. But if you do a life cycle analysis, it's less clear. The gray energy used to make an electric vehicle is more important than for a conventional vehicle, and digital infrastructure must also be taken into account.</p> <p>In addition, switching to the electric car and automatic driving could lead to a preference for the individual car, and disaffection with other more sober means of transport. It's typically a rebound effect.</p> <p>The choice of model for the autonomous mobility of tomorrow (individual, collective and shared mobility, or collective focus on private services) thus plays a crucial role and must be done collectively.</p> <p>Sources : La voiture autonome : découvrez tout sur le véhicule du futur. Le magazine des objets connectés et innovants. Objetconnecte.net, 01/2017 Véhicule autonome : quelle contribution à la décarbonation de la mobilité ? Carbone 4. Stéphane Amant, 11/2018 </p>	<p>vehicle, and digital infrastructure must also be taken into account.</p> <p>In addition, switching to the electric car and automatic driving could lead to a preference for the individual car, and disaffection with other more sober means of transport. It's typically a rebound effect.</p> <p>The choice of model for the autonomous mobility of tomorrow (individual, collective and shared mobility, or collective focus on private services) thus plays a crucial role and must be done collectively.</p> <p>Sources : La voiture autonome : découvrez tout sur le véhicule du futur, Le magazine des objets connectés et innovants. Objetconnecte.net, 01/2017 Véhicule autonome : quelle contribution à la décarbonation de la mobilité ? Carbone 4. Stéphane Amant, 11/2018 [consultés le : 03/01/2022]</p>
<p>5 / 12 True or False?</p> <p>In China: too energy intensive, the 5G is off at night.</p> <p>Feedback</p>	<p>5 / 12 True, False or We don't know?</p> <p>In China: too energy intensive, the 5G is off at night. => false (but biased)</p> <p>Feedback</p> <p>The 5G antennas are well off at night in China, but this is not for the energy overconsumption denounced in the source article of a polemic. They are simply put on standby when they are not used. This is one of the specific features of the 5G standard, which saves energy. The Figaro has dedicated a</p>

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<div data-bbox="170 472 1087 646"> <p>6 / 12 True or False?</p> <p>5G will reduce the carbon impact of digital technologies.</p> </div> <p>Feedback</p> <p>This may be true when using equal data, but rebound and induced effects must be taken into account. For example, if we imagine that by 2030 5G is 40 times more efficient than 4G, but we transmit 100 times more data, the gain is not obvious at all. This trend of increasing data traffic (without sticking to the exact order of magnitude given for the example) is quite possible due to the multiplication of connected objects that should accompany 5G.</p> <p>In addition, if in rebound this technology leads to a multiplication of connected objects, given the share of significant emissions related to their manufacture, can we really consider that 5G will “reduce the carbon impact of digital”?</p> <p>The High Climate Council has quantified the carbon impact of 5G deployment: it could rise in France from 2.7 Mt CO2 eq to 6.7 Mt CO2 eq depending on the scenarios chosen. The current carbon footprint of the digital is about 15 Mt CO2 eq.</p> <p>Sources : La 5G : l'efficacité énergétique "by design", Orange, 02/2020 Pourquoi la 5G gonflera notre consommation d'énergie, Alain Cappy, The conversation, 11/2020</p> <p>Maîtriser l'impact carbone de la 5G, Haut conseil pour le climat, 12/2020</p> 	<p>6 / 12 True, False or We don't know?</p> <p>5G will reduce the carbon impact of digital technologies => “WE DON'T KNOW”</p> <p>Feedback</p> <p>This may be true when using equal data, but rebound and induced effects must be taken into account. For example, if we imagine that by 2030 5G is 40 times more efficient than 4G, but we transmit 100 times more data, the gain is not obvious at all. This trend of increasing data traffic (without sticking to the exact order of magnitude given for the example) is quite possible due to the multiplication of connected objects that should accompany 5G.</p> <p>In addition, if in rebound this technology leads to a multiplication of connected objects, given the share of significant emissions related to their manufacture, can we really consider that 5G will “reduce the carbon impact of digital”?</p>

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<p data-bbox="170 126 411 172">7 / 12 True or False?</p> <p data-bbox="170 224 546 259">5G is dangerous to health.</p> <p data-bbox="163 329 294 358">Feedback</p> <p data-bbox="170 406 1119 574">To answer this question, ANSES (National Agency for Food, Environmental and Labour Health Security) was tasked with assessing the risks associated with exposure of the population to electromagnetic fields arising from this technology. Although captured in July 2018, Anses estimated in January 2020 that it did not have sufficient data to assess the potential risks associated with frequencies around 3.5 GHz and involved operators. But this will depend much on the uses and deployment scenarios adopted. What can be said at this stage is that it does not seem more or less dangerous than 3G or 4G.</p> <p data-bbox="170 639 254 659">Sources :</p> <p data-bbox="170 664 1119 683">La 5G arrive en France, mais les autorités notent « un manque important de données sur ses effets sanitaires », Le Monde, 01/2020</p> <p data-bbox="170 719 915 738">5G : pas de risques nouveaux pour la santé au vu des données disponibles, Anses, 04/2021</p>	<p data-bbox="1224 126 1604 188">7 / 12 True, False or We don't know?</p> <p data-bbox="1224 232 1822 259">5G is dangerous to health => "WE DON'T KNOW"</p> <p data-bbox="1224 303 1352 332">Feedback</p> <p data-bbox="1224 363 2007 753">To answer this question, ANSES (National Agency for Food, Environmental and Labour Health Security) was tasked with assessing the risks associated with exposure of the population to electromagnetic fields arising from this technology. Although captured in July 2018, Anses estimated in January 2020 that it did not have sufficient data to assess the potential risks associated with frequencies around 3.5 GHz and involved operators. But this will depend much on the uses and deployment scenarios adopted. What can be said at this stage is that it does not seem more or less dangerous than 3G or 4G.</p> <p data-bbox="1224 768 1331 787">Sources :</p> <p data-bbox="1224 802 2003 863">La 5G arrive en France, mais les autorités notent « un manque important de données sur ses effets sanitaires », Le Monde, 01/2020</p> <p data-bbox="1224 878 1919 940">5G : pas de risques nouveaux pour la santé au vu des données disponibles, Anses, 04/2021</p> <p data-bbox="1224 946 1541 966">[consultés le : 03/01/2022]</p>
<p data-bbox="170 1044 411 1089">8 / 12 True or False?</p> <p data-bbox="170 1141 630 1177">A city or region may prohibit 5G.</p> <p data-bbox="163 1255 294 1284">Feedback</p>	<p data-bbox="1224 1044 1604 1105">8 / 12 True, False or We don't know?</p> <p data-bbox="1224 1141 1730 1169">A city or region may prohibit 5G => false</p> <p data-bbox="1224 1213 1352 1242">Feedback</p> <p data-bbox="1224 1273 1986 1382">It should be noted that the introduction of 5G technology is subject to the system of technological neutrality provided for in the European Communications Code, which establishes a</p>

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<p>It should be noted that the introduction of 5G technology is subject to the system of technological neutrality provided for in the European Communications Code, which establishes a “general authorisation” to provide electronic communications networks and services. The public regulator does not have to rule on the “why 5G” but only on the “how” of its deployment. Exceptions exist, whether health or technical, but not explicitly environmental or climate (HCC Report).</p> <p>However, many French cities (Strasbourg, Lyon, Tours, Bordeaux, Poitiers, Marseille, Grenoble and Besançon, Blois, Bourg-en-Bresse, etc.) have been deprived of the possibility of blocking at local level. This is also the case with the Citizen Convention for Climate and other citizen groups.</p> <p>Sources : Une ville ou une région peuvent-elles interdire la 5G ?, Le Monde, 09/2020 Rapport du Haut Conseil pour le Climat, Maitriser l'impact carbone de la 5G, 12/2020</p>	<p>“general authorisation” to provide electronic communications networks and services. The public regulator does not have to rule on the “why 5G” but only on the “how” of its deployment. Exceptions exist, whether health or technical, but not explicitly environmental or climate (HCC Report).</p> <p>However, many French cities (Strasbourg, Lyon, Tours, Bordeaux, Poitiers, Marseille, Grenoble and Besançon, Blois, Bourg-en-Bresse, etc.) have been deprived of the possibility of blocking at local level. This is also the case with the Citizen Convention for Climate and other citizen groups.</p> <p>Sources : Une ville ou une région peuvent-elles interdire la 5G ?, Le Monde, 09/2020 Rapport du Haut Conseil pour le Climat, Maitriser l'impact carbone de la 5G, 12/2020 [consultés le : 03/01/2022]</p>
<div data-bbox="170 870 1087 1065" style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 10px;"> <p>9 / 12 True or False?</p> <p>5G will allow the development of technologies for remote medicine.</p> </div> <p>Feedback</p>	<p>9 / 12 True, False or We don't know?</p> <p>5G will allow the development of technologies for remote medicine. => true</p> <p>Feedback</p> <p>Indeed, the technical characteristics of 5G make it a valuable asset for the development of remote surgery and telemedicine. If these technological prowess arouse admiration, and may be very useful in some cases, the generalization of these uses can rightly be questioned. Faced with the rise of telemedicine, which did not wait for 5G, some doctors are worried about a “uberisation” of the health system</p>

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<p>Indeed, the technical characteristics of 5G make it a valuable asset for the development of remote surgery and telemedicine. If these technological prowess arouse admiration, and may be very useful in some cases, the generalization of these uses can rightly question. Faced with the rise of telemedicine, which did not wait for 5G, some doctors are worried about a “uberisation” of the health system following its commodification. They deplore the lack of warmth and clinical contact.</p> <p>Will telemedicine solve the problem of medical deserts or create more inequalities in care? Not sure, even if good coverage of white areas is part of the agreement signed between the state and the operators, they risk delaying because they are subject to profitability.</p> <p>Sources : Des chirurgiens opèrent pour la première fois à l'aide de la 5G, Sciences et Avenir, 02/2019 Travail, famille, Wi-Fi, Le Monde diplomatique, 06/2020</p>	<p>following its commodification. They deplore the lack of warmth and clinical contact.</p> <p>Will telemedicine solve the problem of medical deserts or create more inequalities in care? Not sure, even if good coverage of white areas is part of the agreement signed between the state and the operators, they risk delaying because they are subject to profitability.</p> <p>Sources : Des chirurgiens opèrent pour la première fois à l'aide de la 5G, Sciences et Avenir, 02/2019 Travail, famille, Wi-Fi, Le Monde diplomatique, 06/2020 [consultés le : 03/01/2022]</p>
 <p>10 / 12 True or False?</p> <p>With the 5G, tomorrow, all watched?</p> <p>Feedback</p>	<p>10 / 12 True, False or We don't know?</p> <p>With the 5G, tomorrow, all watched? => "WE DON'T KNOW", but what does it mean watched?</p> <p>Feedback</p> <p>“Smart” video surveillance, a reality in some countries where 5G has been deployed, does not leave indifferent. While it reassures some by promising a safer city, many are alarmed about its use in China, the United States and Europe. This is a choice of society.</p> <p>Large-scale collection of data in a legal or non-legal manner poses a privacy issue. Arcep recalls that telecom networks are subject to French law (GDPR). But the law is difficult to apply, for example to “data brokers”, these companies that sell our consumer data for targeted advertising.</p>

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 <p>Feedback</p> <p><i>5G is simply the fifth generation of mobile phones. It follows logically the 4G and precedes the 6G, as we can read in the Figaro. The difference between 3G, 4G, 5G generations is in the frequency bands used and media access techniques. 5G is an evolutionary technology that will gradually enrich as standards evolve at global level. And yes, scientists are already beginning to talk about 6G, even if they don't yet know what this future generation will understand. A new generation is born every ten years. The networks are piled up, the new one expanding the previous ones. Stéphane Richard, CEO of Orange, talks about turning off 2G by 2025, in Europe, at least for the general public.</i></p> <p>Sources :</p> <p>Qu'est-ce que la 5G ? Neuf réponses pour tout savoir, Le Figaro, 03/2021 A quoi sert la 5G ?, Le Journal du CNRS, Martin Koppe, 01/2021</p>	<p>11 / 12 True, False or We don't know?</p> <p>After 5G, 6G? => true</p> <p>Feedback</p> <p><i>5G is simply the fifth generation of mobile phones. It follows logically the 4G and precedes ...the 6G, as we can read in the Figaro. The difference between 3G, 4G, 5G generations is in the frequency bands used and media access techniques. 5G is an evolutionary technology that will gradually enrich as standards evolve at global level. And yes, scientists are already beginning to talk about 6G, even if they don't yet know what this future generation will understand. A new generation is born every ten years. The networks are piled up, the new one expanding the previous ones. Stéphane Richard, CEO of Orange, talks about turning off 2G by 2025, in Europe, at least for the general public.</i></p> <p>Sources :</p>

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<div data-bbox="170 345 1087 518"> <p>12 / 12 True or False?</p> <p>5G accelerated the Covid 19 a pandemic.</p> </div> <p>Feedback</p> <p>At the beginning of the pandemic, conspiracy theories emerged, spread across social networks and travelled around the world. More or less radical, these theories spread the rumor of a connection between 5G and the pandemic. They claim that the virus does not exist, that it is the electromagnetic waves of 5G that poison the body which then gives birth to the virus, or that these waves warm the body and prevent the immune system from functioning. These theories, denied by Inserm, of course have no scientific basis. Hoaxbuster: The collaborative platform against disinformation is working to verify and limit the spread of such rumors online.</p> <p>Sources : Ces théories du complot qui connectent la 5G et le coronavirus, France Télévisions, 04/2020 Des ondes 5G responsables de la pandémie de Covid-19, vraiment ?, Inserm, Yves Le Dréan, 04/2020 Hoaxbuster, La plateforme collaborative contre la désinformation</p>	<p>12 / 12 True, False or We don't know?</p> <p>5G accelerated the Covid 19 a pandemic => false</p> <p>Feedback</p> <p>At the beginning of the pandemic, conspiracy theories emerged, spread across social networks and travelled around the world. More or less radical, these theories spread the rumor of a connection between 5G and the pandemic. They claim that the virus does not exist, that it is the electromagnetic waves of 5G that poison the body which then gives birth to the virus, or that these waves warm the body and prevent the immune system from functioning. These theories, denied by Inserm, of course have no scientific basis. Hoaxbuster: The collaborative platform against disinformation is working to verify and limit the spread of such rumors online.</p> <p>Sources : Ces théories du complot qui connectent la 5G et le coronavirus, France Télévisions, 04/2020 Des ondes 5G responsables de la pandémie de Covid-19, vraiment ?, Inserm, Yves Le Dréan, 04/2020</p>

Capsule slide	Related text
<div data-bbox="184 138 338 175" style="background-color: #444; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; font-weight: bold;">Conclusion</div> <p data-bbox="176 224 1083 505">Dominique Boullier, a specialist in digital uses, recently called for "beyond the Manichean opposition progress-antiprogres. (...) Make these [connected] objects work for the common good. And, above all, take the time for a real debate on its [the 5G] deployment. However, this nuanced framing suggests that it would be possible to select these uses freely. However, the issue of technological choices is still largely beyond democratic deliberation.</p> <p data-bbox="176 557 1083 751">5G is a highly debated topic between "pro" and "anti" because it is a central technology in the development of a digital future where visions of greener and more secure cities on the one hand are opposed, the widespread surveillance and destruction of living and social relations on the other.</p> <p data-bbox="176 803 903 833">Source : Avec la 5G, demain, tous surveillés, Reporterre, 2021</p> <p data-bbox="176 852 514 881">[accessed on: 03/01/2022]</p> 	<p data-bbox="1220 125 1367 154">Conclusion</p> <p data-bbox="1220 196 1997 532">Dominique Boullier, a specialist in digital uses, recently called for « beyond the Manichean opposition progress-antiprogres. (...) Make these [connected] objects work for the common good. And, above all, take the time for a real debate on its [the 5G] deployment. » However, this nuanced framing suggests that it would be possible to select these uses freely. However, the issue of technological choices is still largely beyond democratic deliberation.</p> <p data-bbox="1220 574 1997 800">5G is a highly debated topic between "pro" and "anti" because it is a central technology in the development of a digital future where visions of greener and more secure cities on the one hand are opposed, the widespread surveillance and destruction of living and social relations on the other.</p> <p data-bbox="1220 803 1934 867">Source : Avec la 5G, demain, tous surveillés, Reporterre, 2021 [consulté le : 03/01/2022]</p>

If you wish to go deeper into certain concepts

[5G overview](#) recalls the context of 5G and why it is difficult to estimate the environmental impacts of 5G with models that clash depending on the scope, the reference data and the scenarios studied.

[Digital technology: concepts and definitions to make it more ecological](#) introduces the concepts of efficiency vs. sobriety, digital sobriety, low-tech for a responsible or eco-responsible digital.

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