



Operating Systemically

21st century solutions for the world's greatest challenges

"Changing the face of journalism."
American Academy of Arts and Sciences

2010 Pulitzer Prize nominee



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circleofblue.org
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About Circle of Blue

Founded in 2000 by leading journalists and scientists, Circle of Blue's mission is to provide relevant, strategic and actionable intelligence about the world's resource crises — with initial intense focus on water and its relationships to food, energy and climate — that facilitates informed accelerated responses and working relationships across all sectors. For more than a decade, Circle of Blue has consistently proven its efficiency, effectiveness, and nimble capacity to create trusted knowledge for informed decisions.

The World's Nexus: Water, Food, Energy

Climate change. Water scarcity and pollution. Energy. Health. Food security. These are serious challenges to our planet, our people and our future. They are vast, complex and deeply rooted chronic wasting diseases caused by human ignorance, indifference and inefficiency.

To cure these ills — and avoid serious, imminent disruption for business, people and the environment – requires far more than awareness, more than money, more than celebrity, more than expertise, more than risk analysis. It requires an effort just as tenacious and adaptive as the problems themselves.

Change requires meaningful methods that motivate action. Intelligence provides ways for that action to be well-informed and well-spent. Waste, whether of money or ideas, is wanton in the global challenge realm. Positive action increases exponentially when new connections unite untapped sources of individual and social genius.

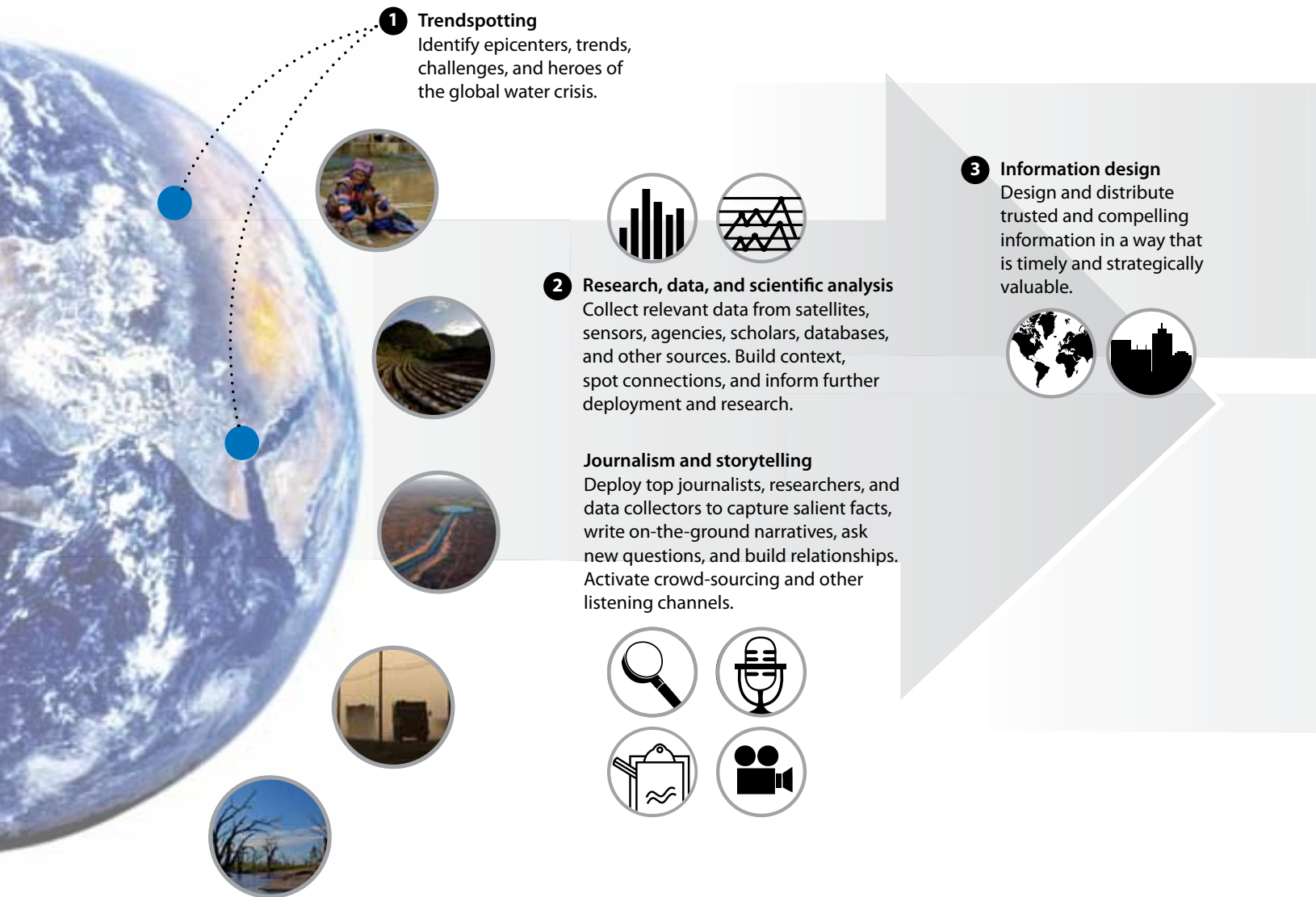
Population growth, urban development, farm production, and climate change are increasing the global competition for fresh water. The result is shortages so acute that virtually every industry in the world anticipates sweeping systemic transformation over the next decade in strategic planning, production practices, and business models.

Circle of Blue
SustainAbility
GlobeScan survey



How We Work

Circle of Blue has developed a globally recognized operating system that is shared by world-leading journalists, designers, multimedia specialists, scientists, and facilitators. The system is the launching point for innovations in communications and public policy development that are as tenacious and adaptive as the crises they are meant to help solve.



A Breakthrough Model

Circle of Blue informs:

Policy

- Budgets
- Programs
- Initiatives
- Resources
- Priorities
- Security
- Diplomacy
- Strategy
- Community
- Collaboration

Public

- Awareness
- Participation
- Crowd-sourcing
- Empowerment
- Transparency
- Priorities

Business

- Markets
- Finance
- Innovation
- Sustainability
- Employee engagement

- 4 Convening and ideation**
Assemble cross-disciplinary groups of stakeholders, analysts, creatives, and process designers to contextualize new findings and inform approaches to solve vexing problems.



- 5 Accelerated Solutions**
- Awareness
 - Informed decisions
 - Sustained behavior
 - Transparency



Journalism and Storytelling

Circle of Blue is “changing the face of journalism” and provides “authoritative, in-depth coverage of a major global problem — the freshwater supply — that few, if any, mainstream news organizations can match.”

American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Throughout history, journalism and storytelling have shaped civilization. Journalists are the first responders to global crises, the listeners to important trends, and the translators between disciplines. The art of the story, well-told, connects relevancy to action.

Circle of Blue engages multimedia journalists who spot trends and find the iconic moments that inspire engagement, understanding, and change. Circle of Blue reporters, best in their field, are defining emergent change and catalyzing participation across disciplines. Contributing talent is drawn from an extensive global network that includes National Geographic, Time, Foreign Policy, Council on Foreign Relations, Getty Images, The New York Times, and other first-rate organizations.



Tehuacán: Divining Destiny — Circle of Blue found that water is a driving force for immigration in Mexico. When her well went dry, Francisca Rosas Valencia’s children left their ancestral home.



Inner Mongolia: Reign of Sand — Drought and poor range practices cause soil from the steppes of Inner Mongolia to blow to Beijing and Los Angeles.



bit.ly/cobcpc

Scan this barcode to read Choke Point: China, the in-depth report about the collision between water supply and energy demand in the world’s fastest-growing economy.

Science and Data

Data, analysis, and context are the basis for all reasoned decisions. Circle of Blue has helped develop Google Fusion Tables and QlikView dashboards that are empowering researchers and the public to manage and share vast libraries of water-related data. Circle of Blue helps users dig, mine, visualize, and connect information that leads to new insights about complex problems.



Above: Circle of Blue, Seed Media Group, and General Electric, through visualizing.org, engaged designers worldwide to produce cutting-edge data visualizations in the 2011 Urban Water Design Challenge.

Left: Data from the Circle of Blue/GlobeScan international survey displayed in a QlikView dashboard.

**“Data can come as numbers.
Data can come as pictures.
Data can come as video.**

The potential of combining these different types of data in the right way is where a lot of the power lies. There’s a circle of data — questions and answers, solutions and their impacts. The biggest potential is to build an ecosystem of data. This means making it easy for the people to upload, to merge data sets, to discuss the data, and to create visualizations.”

Alon Halevy
Senior Engineer
GoogleLabs



Information Design

“We’re challenging the next generation to help solve this problem of access to fresh water, the need to preserve it, and the need to make better use of this scarce resource.”

Ric Grefé
Executive Director
AIGA

Design, says renowned communicator and Circle of Blue board member Brian Collins, is “hope made visible.” Design creates connections across disciplines, distances, and cultures. Design shifts perception of problems, situations, and solutions.

Circle of Blue’s contributing talent is drawn from state-of-the-art design organizations including COLLINS: Transformative Design, World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Design, Icograda, Dublin, AIGA, INDEX, and Icograda. Circle of Blue co-founded “Designing Water’s Future,” which engaged more than 10,000 communications design students from around the world and drew support from UNICEF and the Royal Family of Denmark.



bit.ly/designwf

Scan this barcode to watch an interview with Ric Grefé and Brian Collins, chairman of COLLINS: and former chief creative officer of the Brand Innovation Group, Ogilvy & Mather.

Convening and Ideation

Collaboration bridges backgrounds, disciplines, and demographics. Our work is guided by partnerships with The Value Web, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and others.

Circle of Blue uses the same iterative methods employed by NASA and Boeing to solve complex, systemic problems. We create accelerated solution-processes based on sound information, collaborative experience, and outcome-driven goals. We and our partners have organized convenings in Beijing, Shanghai, San Francisco, Davos, Dubai, and on Capitol Hill.



Above: More than 1,100 people attend a Circle of Blue presentation in Ningxia, China.



Left: Participants at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland collaborate in the Circle of Blue workshop "Designing Water's Future."

Recent Presentations

- World Economic Forum
- Clinton Global Initiative
- Aspen Institute Ideas Festival
- Aspen Environment Forum
- Compass Summit
- World Food Prize
- Given Institute
- Tällberg Forum
- Asian Development Bank
- U.S. Embassy Beijing
- Ningxia University
- U.S. House of Representatives
- Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
- Shanghai Academy of Environmental Sciences
- American Chamber of Commerce, Beijing
- Global Sustainability Conference
- Sustainable Responsible Impact Investing



Accelerated Solutions



From its offices in the heart of the Great Lakes, Circle of Blue engages the best talents that Michigan, the Midwest, and the world have to offer. Each team member sorts fact from fiction, spots major trends, and connects solutions with challenges.



Choke Point: U.S.

First national report on the consequences to America's freshwater resources from new energy development including wind, solar, hydropower, oil, and gas. Nominated for the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Explanatory Reporting and provides baseline comparison for China.



Choke Point: China

The most in-depth exploration of China's water-energy "choke point" with an unprecedented trove of data and new information relevant to China, business, policy and environment. Senior Chinese officials and experts regard the findings as "agenda-setting."



The Biggest Dry

Comprehensive reporting on the 12-year drought that ruined Australia's rice industry and led to food riots in Asia. The report, which spotted other global trends, has been cited by major media and research institutions for the quality of its data and narrative.

Feedback Loop

Circle of Blue's operating system leverages feedback loops and processes to nurture "group genius" — the ability of a group working iteratively and collaboratively to seek, model and put into place higher-level solutions. Benefits are time compression, efficiency, systemic and focused workflows, feedback, individual creativity and collective creativity. Using this approach, Circle of Blue works with The Value Web to systematically and repeatedly bring out the highest levels of thought, performance and collaboration within the organization and the challenges it addresses.



1. Wired, 19.07.



Network

Circle of Blue's founders and staff have been part of the largest publishing events in history, have set agendas, changed policy, achieved breakthroughs in data management, edited major magazines, addressed Congress, orchestrated Olympic bids, and coached legions of talented young people.

Leadership



J. Carl Ganter
Co-Founder and Director

J. Carl Ganter is an award-winning photojournalist, writer, and broadcaster who helped shape the multimedia news era. His work has appeared in most major magazines, newspapers, and television and radio networks. He serves on the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars "Navigating Peace Working Group" and the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Water Security. He earned his MSJ in investigative and magazine writing at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism after graduating with honors from the University's American Studies Program. He co-founded Circle of Blue with his wife, Eileen, when their daughter was born in 2000.

Partners and Projects



The Art of Stewardship • Contact Press Images • Getty Images • Evergreen Exhibitions • Hoffman Institute
The Energy Foundation • Linden Trust for Conservation • Tomorrow Makers • MG Taylor

University Partnerships: Northwestern Michigan College • Northwestern University • Ball State University
Western Kentucky University • Ningxia University • Southwest China University



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Scan this barcode to hear National Public Radio's
On The Media profile of Circle of Blue.

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