

Abstract

Near shore wind farms are regularly subject to fierce debate. Projects can face objections from entrepreneurs and beach guests, claiming their view will be negatively affected and guests will stop visiting their businesses.

Often those claims are accompanied by exaggerated images of giant wind turbines, located right on the beach. On the other hand, comprehensive EIA reports are published by the wind farm developer, trying to prove academically that the impact on the seascape is relatively small.

Whichever way you put it:

Images play an ever increasing role in decision making and public consultation.



Objectives

To have a proper discussion about the visual impact of offshore wind farms, photorealistic images and a proper presentation during the consultation phase are therefore essential

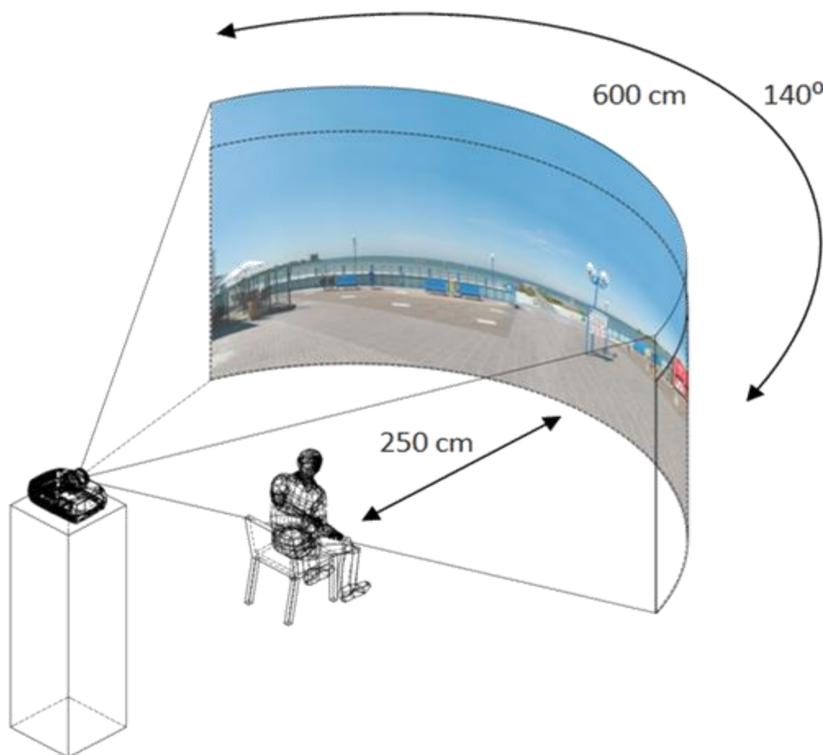
In the past, however, small printed pictures were used.

This causes two problems:

1. We relate to what we see, to what we know from previous experience. In other words: objects we know to be large in the real world, should also be experienced as large in a photo. When this is not the case, we refuse to believe the picture is accurate.
2. We tend to focus too much on the wind farm using small field of view pictures, therewith ignoring the experience we have in the outside world.



Methods



Our solution to these problems is both simple and innovative:

- use a spherical panoramic image,
- presented on a large curved screen.

The size of the screen also solves the 'scale issue': large objects appear large again, without the uncomfortable viewing distance necessary to achieve this on printed images. The spherical screen solves the problem of curves in a large FOV picture.

This tool should be experienced instead of read:

Demonstrations will therefore be given every hour in:

Stand C3-C27

Conclusions

Using this innovative technique has proven to be valuable in many different settings: from design sessions with planning officers and landscape professionals, to information exhibitions to the general public. Even opposition groups at a large wind farm project, located in the Dutch Lake IJsselmeer, stated that the tool was very helpful and, most important, believable.

With the growing importance of stakeholder management, this tool can guide the discussion about visual impact using facts, rather than fiction.

It is all about the image...

References

1. MacDonald, 2012: Windfarm Visualisation

2. Scottish National Heritage, 2014: Visual representation of wind farms

