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**Presentation Title:** Worth A Thousand Words: New Opportunities With Virtual Reality And Wind Energy

**Abstract:** We investigate how public attitudes towards wind energy projects shift depending on the way these projects are presented. Prior research has established that the way projects are presented impacts public attitudes towards projects, but insights investigating the importance of immersive media are scarce. Despite recent advances in virtual reality (VR) and other immersive techniques, potential wind energy projects are typically presented to the public using traditional media (e.g., photos) that simulate how turbines will appear in the local landscape. The presentation will summarize results from three related studies. The first study examined the impact of a single immersive medium (a 360 video of a wind project delivered using VR) on attitudes toward renewable and non-renewable energy. This study highlights the importance of the auditory component in social acceptance of wind projects, which has not been adequately investigated in prior literature. The other two studies seek to better understand the relationship between visual presentation and attitudes. The first study (N = 130) compares (i) 2D still images of a real single-turbine wind project, with a (ii) 2D video, and (iii) 360 video presented in virtual reality (VR). More immersive, multimodal media such as VR are expected to give the subjects a more accurate understanding of a proposed wind project, potentially allaying concerns during the siting and permitting process, or enabling better communication between stakeholders, developers and regulatory agencies. The final study uses a conjoint analysis to examine the influence of image features on public attitudes. We adapt this method to investigate social acceptance of wind projects by varying the project location (e.g., beach vs. industrial), number of turbines and their spacing, as well as other image features (e.g., presence vs. absence of birds). Specifically, we test which features impact viewer preferences for or against a potential wind farm.