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Joint press release with BITKOM

Climate protection and resource efficiency
Annual conference: Challenges and opportunities for IT and telecommunications sector

Goods and services in the IT and telecommunications industry (ICT) can do their bit to harmonise the goals of climate protection and economic growth. This is the conclusion reached at the annual conference on the challenges and opportunities posed by climate protection and resource efficiency (*Jahreskonferenz Klimaschutz und Ressourceneffizienz – Herausforderungen und Marktchancen für die Informationswirtschaft und Telekommunikation***) hosted yesterday by the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), the Federal Environment Agency (UBA), and the German Association for Information Technology, Telecommunications, and New Media (BITKOM).**

"I am convinced that intelligent ITC infrastructures and devices can do something positive to protect the environment and for economic development in Germany, by saving jobs", said Prof. Dr. Andreas Troge, President of the Federal Environment Agency (UBA). Thanks to joint efforts by BMU, UBA and BITKOM, awareness of the problem of increasing energy consumption has been raised among many manufacturers, IT service providers and computer centre operators, as evidenced in the fact that "green IT" will be a key focus area at this year's CeBIT.

Rising power consumption in the ITC industry will affect climate policy. In 2004 ITC-related power consumption, including entertainment electronics, accounted for over 28 million tonnes of CO_2 emissions. In Germany, the share in total power consumption for which the ITC and entertainment electronics sector is responsible is roughly eight per cent. According to market research, the ITC sector is responsible for about two percent of CO_2 emissions worldwide. At the same time ITC makes up roughly six per cent of global value added. "The industry's energy efficiency is superior to the average in all other sectors by a factor of three", said Martin Jetter, member of BITKOM's Presiding Committee. The objective must be to decouple economic growth and energy consumption, which would require all industries throughout the economy to construct, produce, use, and recycle more energy-efficient products. If every fourth business

trip in Europe were replaced by a video conference, WWF estimates that some 28 million tonnes CO_2 emissions could be saved. Although the share of ITC products in CO_2 emissions would hereby rise, the net balance of global CO_2 emissions is clearly positive. "ITC has a great leverage effect on the energy efficiency of the entire national economy", commented Jetter. According to UBA calculations, some six million tonnes of carbon dioxide can already be saved at computer centres, by cutting idling losses, and by means of Thin Clients. That is 15 per cent of the 40 million tonnes which the federal government has set as its 2020 goal to save electricity. Thin Clients are computers that have no hard disk or drives and are used only for data input and output. All programs and data are on the server. Any processing is done by the server. If one third of the PCs in Germany switched to thin client architecture, there would be annual savings of one million tonnes CO_2 and about 100,000 tonnes of material, special metals and plastics. "We must focus on more than just saving energy. It is time to take a closer look at materials efficiency and resource scarcity", said Federal Environment Agency President Troge. Instruments with which to save natural resources in ITC use are ecological signs along which consumers, public offices and businesses can orient themselves for the sake of protecting the environment when purchasing ICT devices. "I believe the Blue Angel or the Energy Star, for example, as emblems of ecological and energy-efficient ICT, are necessary. It therefore requires great efforts to make these signs visible directly at points of sale", said Troge. Jetter und Troge emphasised that "manufacturers must offer efficient devices and provide consumers with comprehensive information. Consumers must take energy efficiency into account when making buying decisions". A study of PCs done by the Energy Saving Trust shows that ecological consumer behaviour can cut another six percent in the energy consumption in the most modern devices. Green IT also saves costs: energy consumption will become one of the biggest cost factors for many computer centres in the next five years. When executed properly, the costs of setting up a modern green IT system pay off within two years, by virtue of energy savings alone.

BITKOM and BMU are working in cooperation to develop a guide to efficient computer centres and will also issue a "best practice" brochure. They are also developing measures by which consumers can relieve the burden on the environment when using the Internet (titled *Grüner Surfen*). The BMU documentation to the conference on future green markets/'green' computer centres is available at
www.borderstep.de/details.php?menue=22&subid=23&projektid=110&le=de.
Documentation on the BMU-UBA conference on the future perspectives of more energy-efficient use of the Internet is here:
www.dialogprozess-konsum.de/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=37

Dessau-Roβlau, 15 February 2008