

# Press Release No. 11/2009

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## **Green information technology: ecologically and economically superior**

### **Starting at CeBIT: New consumer advice brochure**

Information and communications technology (ICT) is the backbone of a modern national economy. However, digitalisation in households and offices, as well as the Internet, are causing high electricity and materials consumption. It takes about ten power plants to cover the power needs of ICT in Germany's modern households alone. Be it the digital camera, notebook, games console, mobile phone or plasma television, ICT produced emissions of some 33 million tonnes of the global warming gas carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in 2007, more than the total produced by German aviation. "Information and communications technology is a growth market- also in terms of emissions of gases damaging the climate, which is why climate protection is very important in this area", said Dr. Thomas Holzmann, Vice President of the Federal Environment Agency (UBA). On the occasion of the opening of the CeBIT computer fair in Hannover on 3 March 2009, the UBA is offering a free consumer advice brochure with information on purchasing low-energy computers, green surfing and ecological upgrading of older devices.

Computers with similar computing power and features can unfortunately vary in their energy consumption. Just as with cars there are the gas-guzzlers and the economy models. "Take a look at more than only gigabytes and pixel count when buying a computer and also consider energy use. Every new acquisition can determine energy consumption for years to come. There are rewards for those who take a closer look when buying", explains Holzmann. A very efficient computer saves between 50-70 percent of the power consumed by an inefficient one, and low-energy devices need not be more expensive than their opposites.

Consumers should make sure that the new devices meet their own specific demands. Although hardly anybody wants to be left behind technically speaking, being bigger, faster, and more powerful may actually exceed actual use requirements, and it consumes more power and is often more expensive than necessary. "If you only need a computer to do word processing and surf, you certainly do not need a video editor", says the UBA's Vice President.

"Green" information technology actually goes beyond energy saving alone, for the production of equipment itself is very costly. It takes about 1,500 litres of water and 23 kilos of different chemicals to produce a single PC and monitor. The electronic components also have precious metals such as gold, silver, tantalum, or platinum whose extraction all burden the environment and place a strain on natural resources. Furthermore, PCs, mobile phones or laptops contain

lead, mercury, cadmium and other substances that can damage health. Therefore, used electrical and electronic equipment should not be disposed of in the household waste but instead collected separately and recycled. This is absolutely free of charge to consumers, as they can return their used devices to municipal collection points.

**“Sustainability in a digital world” is the motto of the Green IT World at the CeBIT fair in Hannover, 3-8 March 2009, at which the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), the German Association for Information Technology, Telecommunications and New Media (BITKOM) and the Federal Environment Agency (UBA), together with many other companies, will present IT innovations that have proven to be both ecologically and economically successful. They range from low-energy notebooks and energy-efficient datacentres to ultra-modern videoconferencing solutions.**

The new *Computer, Internet und Co. - Geld sparen und Klima schützen* brochure (in German) is available for free download at [http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-medien/mysql\\_medien.php?anfrage=Kennnummer&Suchwort=3725](http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-medien/mysql_medien.php?anfrage=Kennnummer&Suchwort=3725)

A free print version is available from the Federal Environment Agency c/o GVP, P.O. Box 30 0361, 53183 Bonn, or by phoning (local call rate) (03018) 305 3355, or sending an email order to: [uba@broschuerenversand.de](mailto:uba@broschuerenversand.de).

All information about UBA and its publications is here: <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/cebit/>. Stop by and visit us at the CeBIT in Hannover in Hall 8, the “Green IT World”.

Dessau-Roßlau, 2 March 2009