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Computers to go green Ecology is focus of this year's CeBIT

PCs, notebooks and mobile phones perform invaluable services, and we could hardly cope in our daily lives anymore without information and communication technology (ICT). However, ICT ravenously consumes large amounts of energy. The share of IT and entertainment electronics in overall electricity consumption in Germany is presently estimated at roughly eight per cent. Furthermore, the IT sector is responsible for some two percent of the world's CO₂ emissions. "Manufacturers must make more efficient appliances available and educate consumers who can then consider energy efficiency when making purchases. This will lighten the load on the environment and the purse", said Prof. Dr. Andreas Troge, President of the Federal Environment Agency (UBA). One important instrument that provides guidance on the market is the Blue Angel (*Der Blaue Engel*), which is now celebrating its 30th year. The Blue Angel labels ecological devices such as computers, printers or photocopiers. The computer industry has its sights on protection of the climate this year, and therefore "Green IT" will be one focal point at the CeBIT.

Older models of devices in our private households consume particularly high amounts of electricity. However, newer equipment is not always low-energy either, and all devices use power even when they are not in use, that is, when idling. This need not be, for one can recognise energy-saving devices by a sticker that attests to that fact. It is a seal put on any electrical and electronic apparatus that uses less than one watt power when on stand-by, and which can actually be switched off to consume no power at all.

"Showing environmentally behaviour as concerns computer use means not saving energy as well as resources. In Germany alone there are several million old mobile phones no longer in use that are lying around in drawers, representing a considerable amount of precious metals. We must do more to recycle these", said Troge. Even better than recycling is manufacturing more durable electrical and electronic goods that are in use for a longer time. Manufacturers in particular are called upon to offer more products with a longer lifetime; that is, devices that can also be repaired at reasonable cost and retrofitted with new parts. "Equipment that becomes unusable shortly before the warranty expires annoys consumers and burdens the environment", continued Troge.

The *Klimaschutz und Ressourceneffizienz - Herausforderungen und Marktchancen für die Informationswirtschaft und Telekommunikation* [Climate protection and resource efficiency - Challenges and market opportunities for IT and telecommunications sectors] publication is available for download at <http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/produkte/index.htm>.

In a joint project with the Federal Association of Information Technology, Telecommunications and New Media - BITKOM, the German Ministry of the Interior's Procurement Office, and the German Army's Federal Office for Information Management and Information Technology, an Internet-based guide to non-proprietary performance descriptions has become available. It aims to provide a basis for non-proprietary and ecological public purchasing with which so support public purchasers at federal, state and community level: <http://www.itk-beschaffung.de/>.

More information on the topic is available on the Federal Environment Agency web pages at:

<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/energie/index.htm>

<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/leerlauf/neues/Energiesparen.pdf>

Information on the Blue Angel:

<http://www.blauer-engel.de/>

www.blauer-engel.de/downloads/BE_Ratgeber_Buero.pdf

Documentation on talks sponsored by BMU and UBA, „Grüner Surfen - Perspektiven für eine energieeffiziente Nutzung des Internets“ is available here (in German):

www.dialogprozess-konsum.de/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=37,

Documentation on the annual climate protection and resource efficiency conference (Klimaschutz und Ressourceneffizienz) sponsored by BITKOM, BMU and UBA is here:

<http://www.dialogprozess-konsum.de/itk-konferenz>

Dessau-Roßlau, 5 March 2008