

## HIGH TECH HOMES USHER IN NEW ‘ICE AGE’

- **Energy burden of ‘ICE Age’ products set to escalate to £4.9 billion by 2020**

A report released today by the Energy Saving Trust reveals the dawn of a new ‘ICE (Information, Communication, Entertainment) Age’ as a proliferation of home entertainment equipment, such as DAB radios, flat screen TVs and laptops, across the UK undermines efforts to manage domestic energy demand to curb the effects of climate change. The *Ampere Strikes Back* report identifies the energy burden of this new set of products that, combined with the hoarding of old products and unwitting wastage, means that, by 2020, ‘ICE age’ technology will account for an extraordinary 45% of electricity used in UK households. That’s equivalent to 14 power stations just to power our TVs, home IT and other electronics by 2020.

### A new ‘ICE age’

The growing popularity of technology such as DAB radios, set top boxes, laptops, LCD and plasma TVs means that the annual UK spend on consumer electronics and home IT equipment has soared to over £12 billion, making UK consumers the biggest spenders in Europe<sup>1</sup>. While the average UK household spends £500 a year on ‘ICE age’ products, one in 10 UK householders spends between £1,000 and £10,00<sup>10</sup> a year on these kinds of goods. By 2020, according to current predictions, products contained in the average home could be racking up running costs of over £4 billion a year. When the unintentional misuse of these “ICE Age offenders” left on or on standby<sup>2</sup> or when not in use is combined with the impact of this equipment in use, the environmental and financial costs escalate further<sup>3</sup>:

Equipment	Standby costs (£) by 2020	In use costs (£) by 2020	Total running costs (£) by 2020
Televisions	£71 million	£1.59 billion	£1.66 billion
Set top boxes	£299 million	£1.12 billion	£1.42 billion
Video players/recorders	£188 million	£208 million	£396 million
Computers	£37 million	£933 million	£970 million
Computer monitors	£12 million	£408 million	£420 million
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£607 million</b>	<b>£4.26 billion</b>	<b>£4.87 billion</b>

### ‘Lonely gadgets and unwitting wastefulness’

New entertainment hubs are springing up around the house with 96% of lounges, 76% of bedrooms and 42% kitchens hotspots for home entertainment equipment. The report reveals that this proliferation of high-tech kit dotted around UK homes is causing consumers to forget what they've left on and where. While owners' backs are turned, gadgets like televisions, computers, set top boxes and video recorders are spending billions of hours sucking up energy by 2020 will use more electricity than 1.4 million households consume in a year or the UK's street lighting consumes in three years.

### **'Thrifty hoarding'**

Purchase of new kit doesn't mean consumers are getting rid of their old equipment however – far from it! One fifth of UK householders are thrifty hoarders, relegating their old equipment to a second division to be used in other rooms in the house and adding to the overall energy burden.

Research also reveals that over half the UK population (54%) believes that modern technology equipment is more energy efficient than older technology but the reverse is often the case.

Philip Sellwood, Chief Executive of the Energy Saving Trust, commented: "Products are being used in ways that were undreamt of just a few years ago. With trends such as listening to the radio through TV and PC on the increase, it's highly unlikely that consumers realise that this uses far more energy than conventional means, or that some digital radios use almost as much energy when considered switched off at the unit as they do while switched on, while a new flat panel TV can use up to three times more electricity than a 'traditional' TV."

"UK consumers will be surprised to hear just what their home entertainment equipment gets up to. *The Ampere Strikes Back* report holds up a mirror to all of us and shows just how easy it is to lose track of what is sucking up energy in our homes and costing us and the environment dear."

These factors mean that the Energy Saving Trust is calling on consumers to do their bit for the environment while saving themselves some money. Philip Sellwood explained: “Think about how you are using appliances and turn equipment off when not needed as well as rein in the impulse to hoard equipment that has already been replaced. By being more ‘switched on’ with our appliances the average household could save £37 a year through avoided standby use alone and some of the 2020 energy burden projections could be curbed.”

The Energy Saving Trust has identified a number of simple ways consumers can cut consumption and running costs:

- **Look for the logo...** Look out for the Energy Saving Recommended logo when you're buying new electrical appliances. The logo appears on a growing range of products – from fridge freezers to light fittings - indicating the most energy efficient in the market place. Computing equipment is set to be included as the scheme expands its categories.
- Visit [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk) for the **Energy Saving Trust's Buyers' Guide** and details of the most energy efficient products.
- For further advice, contact the Energy Saving Trust's network of advice centres, which offer consumers advice and information on energy efficiency. For details of your nearest centre, contact 0800 512012 or visit [www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk).

### **Help us to help ourselves**

Whilst the report encourages consumers to do their bit, it also calls on retailers and manufacturers to do more to help them achieve this aim. This is borne out by the Energy Saving Trust's research which reveals that nine out of ten consumers want to see A - G energy efficiency ratings on consumer electronic goods to help them improve their buying decisions, while eight out of ten would like manufacturers to develop 'intelligent' energy saving items which power down after half an hour.

The report also highlights that pressure should be applied to television manufacturers to ensure they enable a 'screen blanking' feature in all their TV models which allows the user to manually switch off the screen after the desired radio station has been selected thereby saving energy. The Energy Saving Trust believes that this feature should be explained in

instructions with the TV but currently only one manufacturer has this feature in their technology.

In response to the increasing demand from consumers for greater clarity of labelling on electrical goods, the Energy Saving Trust is developing new Energy Saving Recommended categories in the following areas:

- DAB digital radios
- Desktops (ICT)
- Imaging equipment (ICT)
- Laptops (ICT)
- Monitors (ICT)
- Microwaves

**-ends-**

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<sup>1</sup> Sourced from Consumer Electronics Market Europe 2006, GfK Marketing Services Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> In this case standby includes consumption in the “off” and “sleep” modes. For more information on the various modes of operation of consumer electronics please see the Ampere Strikes Back report.

<sup>3</sup> Costs supplied by MTP and assumes a current electricity price of 10.41p/kWh

**Notes to editors:**

Unless stated otherwise, all figures quoted are taken from DEFRA’s Market Transformation Programme, except for the following from a survey by ICM:

- 9% of UK householders spend between £1,000 and £10,000 a year on ‘ICE age’ products
- 96% of lounges, 76% of bedrooms and 42% of kitchens contain any of the following: TV, PC, DAB radios, soundsystem, set top box, broadband
- 54% of the UK population believe that modern technology equipment is more energy efficient than older technology

ICM’s online research was based on a representative sample of 1022 UK residents aged 18 and over during May 2007

**About EST**

The Energy Saving Trust is one of the UK’s leading organisations set up to address the

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damaging effects of climate change. It aims to cut carbon dioxide emissions - the main greenhouse gas causing climate change - by promoting the sustainable and efficient use of energy.

The Energy Saving Trust is an independent, non-profit making organisation and acts as a bridge between government, consumers, trade, businesses, local authorities and the energy market. It provides impartial information and advice and has a network of advice centres in the UK specifically designed to help consumers take action to save energy.

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