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## ICT and energy: User trends and understandings among young people

- What are the energy-implications of current trends in young peoples' use of ICT?
- What do young people think about the connection between ICT and energy?
- And what do they think about their personal role in relation to reducing the energy consumption related to their use of ICT?

These were the main questions behind a newly finished study carried out by the Danish Building Research Institute, Dune Works and Smart Homes and with contribution from all other useITsmartly partners. The study combines a literature-based mapping of current trends in ICT-related energy consumption and young peoples' use of ICT with focus groups of participants aged 16-20 held in Austria, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands and Norway. Seventeen focus groups were carried out with a total number of 114 participants from different types of schools.

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## Energy-intensive user practices of youths are on the rise

The mapping of current ICT trends and their energy implications identified a number of energy-intensive user practices, which are important to address in the later stages of the *useITsmartly* project. It is one of our goals to study young peoples' knowledge about the environmental aspects of their ICT usage (including their motivation in relation to change practices).

User practices include both **well-known issues** such as...

- ✓ frequent renewal of ICT devices,
- ✓ the habit of not turning off devices (standby consumption) and watching television on TV sets.

as **relatively new or emerging activities** such as...

- ✓ those involving high internet data traffic (in particular video streaming), which result in high energy consumption in the internet infrastructure (data transmission and data centres).



## Questioning the youths' way of using ICT can easily be interpreted as questioning their way of living

The focus groups show that today ICT is highly integrated in the everyday practices of young people. Therefore, questioning their way of using ICT can easily be interpreted by young ones as questioning their way of living.

The focus groups also show that the **awareness and knowledge about energy and environmental implications of ICT are limited among young people**, although many possess some practical knowledge about the direct electricity consumption of mobile devices due to the heat they produce and the limitations of battery charges.

When it comes to changing their own practices in order to save energy, the focus groups show that most young people are critical about this. Mainly because **they believe that ICT does not consume much energy and that the potential energy savings would be like "a drop in the ocean"**. This seems to be one of the most important challenges for developing interventions and campaigns addressing young peoples' use of ICT.

### Possible "entry points" for the theme of energy consumption

This said, the study also identified a number of possible "entry points" (enablers) for bringing the theme of energy consumption on the agenda in relation to ICT usage. These include, among others, a general concern among young people with regard to the possible negative consequences on the personal level of their intensive use of ICT (e.g. distraction and wasting time). Thus, addressing these negative implications could be one way of opening the discussion of ICT usage and perhaps promoting a more "reflexive" and less energy-intensive use of ICT among young people.



For a detailed presentation of this study on ICT trends, energy implications and user practices among young people, please feel free to download the technical report on our website:

<http://www.useitsmartly.com/downloads>



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## Step by step – What's next?

#useITsmartly



Greetings from Austria

Currently **we are running creativity workshops** with young people in all five partner countries: Austria, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway. Its purpose is to get participants to develop various innovative ideas on how to change target groups' knowledge, attitudes and practices to use ICT more smartly.

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One **expert workshop** to evaluate and assess the youths' innovative ideas will be held on April, 24<sup>th</sup> 2014 at Eindhoven, The Netherlands. For further information please contact: Herjan vdHeuvel [h.vdheuvel@smart-homes.nl](mailto:h.vdheuvel@smart-homes.nl) or Tomas Mathijssen [tomas.mathijssen@duneworks.nl](mailto:tomas.mathijssen@duneworks.nl)

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## Who we are – building a European useITsmartly community

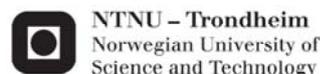
We are scientists, stakeholders and multipliers passionately thinking about how technologies can be used in an energy-efficient way. Our **goal is to communicate with and through youths about creative new concepts of "smart IT use"**.

Interested in energy efficient IT use and green living?  
Join us and share your ideas with us!

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## Partner institutions



Radboud University Nijmegen



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