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Universities To Cut Internet Energy Use

Two British Universities will investigate how to reduce the energy consumption of the Internet, which currently consumes 3 to five percent of the world's power

By: Tom Jowitt

June 11, 2010

Tags: Cambridge University, energy, University Of Leeds



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Two British universities have been given millions of pounds to find out how to cut the power consumption of ICT networks whilst still enabling their growth.

The Internet and other networks use an increasing amount of power, and Leeds and Cambridge Universities have received a £5.9 million, five-year grant from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) to look into ways to reduce this.

Power Hungry IT

"Over the last 20 years the Internet has grown from almost nothing to something of enormous economic and social value," said a Leeds University release. "But in the meantime, its consumption of electricity, which currently stands at 3 percent to 5 percent of the global supply, is increasing exponentially."

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There is little doubt that IT equipment is responsible for a notable part of the world's electrical consumption. Indeed, according to analyst Gartner the IT industry has a carbon footprint similar to that of aviation, of approximately two per cent of global emissions.

The money from the grant will be used to fund the 'INTElligent Energy awARE NETworks' (INTERNET)

project, which aims to [reduce the carbon footprint of ICT networks](#) by at least an order of magnitude. It also aims to reduce non-renewable energy consumption.

It joins industry efforts such as [Alcatel Lucent's Green Touch](#), with the more ambitious aim of reducing the energy used in networks by a factor of 1000 in the next five years. Alcatel Lucent's Bell Labs research arm has proposed various ways to [make networks more energy efficient](#). Meanwhile many private sector organisations have turned to more energy efficient technologies, [such as video conferencing](#), and new legislation such as [the UK's CRC legislation](#) is pushing people to make networks and other tech more efficient.

More Efficient Networks



"The funding will offer us the stability and flexibility needed to address the major challenges associated with energy utilisation in telecommunication networks," said [Professor Jaafar Elmighani](#) (left), the project's lead investigator. "I am delighted that we have been recognised in this way."

"The predicted future growth in the number of connected devices, and of the bandwidth of the Internet of an order of magnitude or two, is not practical if it leads to a

corresponding growth in energy consumption," Professor Elmighani said. "Regulations may therefore come soon, particularly if governments worldwide enforce moves towards carbon neutrality."

The project will see Professor Elmighani lead work on optical networks, while Professor Jon Crowcroft at the University of Cambridge will lead a team looking at the optimisation of internet and web protocols and services. Another team, led by Professor Richard Penty and Professor Ian White at the University of Cambridge, will concentrate on optical routing and data communications.

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Post by: Jimmy, [June 11, 2010 : 1:51 pm](#)

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