Beat: Business

Mobile devices squander $80 billion in power each year

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USPA News - Mobile devices which are connected to the internet unnecessarily waste $80 billion in power each year, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Wednesday, calling on manufacturers to make changes to standby mode that allows devices to waste energy. The 14 billion internet-connected devices around the world significantly contribute to the world`s increasing electricity demand due to inefficient technology.

However, according to a report published by the International Energy Agency, simple procedures can be implemented to reduce this waste and improve energy efficiency in online devices. The world`s demand for energy has continued to escalate in recent years with the increasing number of people who have access to networked devices and appliances. And while this connectivity has bettered the lives of many around the world, the current cost is "much higher than it should be," said IEA Executive Director Maria van der Hoeven. Improving energy efficiency in our progressively digital economies would result in enormous energy and money savings. "Consumers are losing money in the form of wasted energy, which is leading to more costly power stations and more distribution infrastructure being built than we would otherwise need - not to mention all the extra greenhouse gases that are being emitted," Van der Hoeven said. "If we adopt best available technologies we can minimize the cost of meeting demand as the use and benefits of connected devices grows." The report describes the heart of the problem: uneconomical "network standby" modes which preserves network connections while in standby. When a device is put on the standby setting, it appears that the device has gone to sleep and is nearly off, while in reality, most network-enabled devices use nearly as much power in this mode as when they are fully on and activated. "The problem is not that these devices are often in standby mode, but rather that they typically use much more power than they should to maintain a connection and communicate with the network," said Van der Hoeven. "Just by using today`s best available technology, such devices could perform exactly the same tasks in standby while consuming around 65 percent less power." Most of the electricity used around the world in 2013 - approximately 616 terawatt hours (TWh) of electricity - resulted from devices consuming power in standby mode. Roughly 400 TWh, which is equal to the amount of electricity consumed annually by the United Kingdom and Norway combined, was squandered because of inefficient technology. The IEA report proposes a myriad of technical solutions and policy alternatives that could assist in reducing energy waste, calling on policy makers, manufacturers, service providers and software and hardware developers to assist. It also predicts that if improved energy efficiency procedures are applied to online devices in the future, 600 TWh of energy - equal to shutting down 200 standard 500 MW coal-fired power plants - could be saved, which would reduce emissions by 600 million metric tons of CO2.

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