



RENN

Regional Hubs for
Sustainability Strategies

Using electronic devices sustainably

The sustainable shopping basket:
Guide to environmentally conscious
and social consumption





How eco and electro go together

Information and communication technology are the source of increasing amounts of carbon emissions. People in Germany are buying more and more electronic devices, too – and using them for ever shorter lengths of time. Over 95 percent of German households, for instance, own cell phones. Flat-screen TVs can be found in almost 87 percent of households, and clothes dryers, in some 43 percent. Electronic devices are often disposed of even when they are still fully functional. A more sustainable use of electronics will save precious resources both during the devices' production and their life cycle.



ENERGY-SAVING HOUSEHOLD DEVICES

While energy-saving devices may be more expensive to purchase, they use less energy. For instance, a fridge rated A+++, the top energy class, uses only half the energy of an A+ class device. For large household devices, the EU energy label with various efficiency classes applies. When it comes to washing machines, size plays an important role in energy consumption: When you put in half a load, you don't save half the energy, but only 20 to 30 percent. And automatic capacity regulation won't help. Therefore, it's better to compare smaller and larger washing machines. If you own an old vacuum cleaner, it's worth buying a new one: Since 2017, wattage has been limited.

PUT AN END TO STANDBY

Standby operation uses unnecessary energy, especially in older devices. TV sets that were bought before 2010 use ten times as much energy as current models. If their power unit is plugged in, pre-2010 computers consume energy even when turned off. Even more recent computer screens have this problem. Which is why you should always disconnect unused devices from the main. Switchable multi-socket outlets are a good solution. It's best to switch off all your electronic devices at night.

SHOPPING TIPS FOR ELECTRONIC DEVICES

When it comes to PCs, laptops and notebooks, remember this: High performance means high energy consumption. Which is why you should think carefully about the exact technical features you need. By choosing wisely, you can avoid over 80 percent of electricity costs. The smaller the device, the more energy efficient it will be. When selecting a TV, go for LED or OLED backlighting, as this saves more energy than the older LCD technology. Size can matter, too, when it comes to energy consumption. The screen diagonal should measure no more than one third of the distance between the sofa and the TV.

USE ENERGY-SAVING MODE

Activate the energy-saving mode of your computer. Avoid energy-intensive screen savers and use the sleep mode when you're not active at the computer. Unlike standby, sleep mode completely shuts down the computer, yet allows it to be quickly rebooted. When it comes to TVs and screens, reducing brightness and contrast also saves energy.

DEACTIVATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

Deactivate as many of the services and apps of your smartphone that you aren't currently using – by setting your phone to airplane mode. WLAN, Bluetooth, mobile data, ge positioning, apps running in the background and voice control consume an unnecessary amount of energy and shorten battery run time. Your screen should not be any brighter than necessary since the lighting of screens uses up a particularly large amount of energy.

USE DEVICES FOR A LONG TIME

The production process of a smartphone creates 75 percent of its overall carbon emissions. The raw materials for cell phones, computers, etc., including cobalt, neodymium, tantalum, silver and gold, are partly mined in dangerous conditions, and oftentimes in countries without sufficiently high social and environmental standards. What's more, old devices are typically disposed of incorrectly, thereby putting a strain on the environment. Even when recycling is done sensibly in Germany, it goes without saying that valuable raw materials end up being lost. You can protect the environment by using your devices for as long as possible.

FIXING BROKEN DEVICES

Always check to see if a broken device can be repaired – it's almost always a more sustainable solution than buying a new device. Defective devices such as washing machines can also be sold to tinkerers online or to secondhand stores. You might also manage to do it yourself: You'll find free repair tutorials on the



internet. You'll also find an increasing number of re-
pair cafés in cities – you can take your broken devices
(and other things) there and have them fixed together
with experts or other visitors to the café.

DISPOSING OF ELECTRONICS THE CORRECT WAY

Electrical and electronic devices contain valuable
resources, yet older models sometimes also contain
toxic substances such as lead, mercury or chlorofluor-
ocarbons (CFCs). Consumers are legally obliged to
dispose of electrical and electronic devices correctly.
Keep in mind: Every device containing an electronic
component part counts as an electronic device – this
includes flashing sneakers or bathroom cupboards
with integrated lighting. It's an offense to throw it in
the trash, or worse, to dispose of it in nature. Any prod-
uct that must be recycled is marked as such with the
crossed-out trash can symbol on its packaging.

LOOK FOR THE FOLLOWING SEALS

The **EU Ecolabel** identifies
products with a low environmental
impact.



The **TCO label** is a seal for
particularly sustainable screens,
notebooks and keyboards.



Office equipment and computers
with a low environmental impact
may display the **Blue Angel** ecolabel.



The **TÜV Rhineland Green Product
Mark seal** applies to laptops that
were manufactured with fewer
negative environmental influences.



The **EU energy label** shows the
energy consumption of a device.



The sustainable shopping basket

Check out www.nachhaltiger-warenkorb.de for important information about sustainable consumption as well as independent information about the various seals and product labels. You'll find information about food, travel and mobility, living and building, housekeeping and electronics, as well as fashion and cosmetics.

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