

Press release

Award-winning EWE named smart grid pioneer

Environmental NGO Deutsche Umwelthilfe awards ecoIT prize to Oldenburg-based energy supplier – Pioneer for intelligent electricity meters and networks – First winner of prize for "going green with IT" project – EWE Box cuts energy use by up to 10% – Intelligent networks crucial for more renewable energies

Radolfzell/Oldenburg, Germany, 25 November 2009. The Oldenburg-based energy supplier EWE AG has performed pioneering work in the field of intelligent electricity and natural gas meters. Today, EWE AG's work was honoured as "ecoIT project of the month" by the environmental NGO Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V. (DUH). This is the first time the prize has been awarded for a project which pursues the principle of "going green with IT" rather than just green IT. The intelligent meters – which the German government hopes to have fitted in the country's new-builds as of 1 January 2010 – have been undergoing tests in north-west Germany for over a year. In a field test involving some 400 selected households, the energy supplier wanted to find out whether the intelligent meters really can help to reduce electricity and gas consumption and thereby help with climate protection. The answer is a resounding yes.

"EWE is one of the first energy suppliers in Germany to utilise IT as a means of making consumers' energy use more transparent", Steffen Holzmann, Head of the ecoIT Project at DUH, says enthusiastically. With its "EWE Box", the company enables customers to find out all about their electricity and natural gas consumption in real time. The service has been well received by consumers. "The EWE Box has passed its practical test. The test showed that customers cut their electricity use by up to ten per cent with this technical innovation. People who know how much electricity and natural gas they are using start consciously managing their consumption", explains Ludwig Kohnen, who is responsible for the product at the Oldenburg-based energy supplier. As well as using the EWE Box, all EWE customers are set to be given the option of an "intelligent" rate in the first half of 2010. This will allow users to avoid peak load periods and prices.

The EWE Box is a small, innovative computer which measures electricity and natural gas consumption in detail and passes this data on to EWE's central computer via an internet connection. Customers can view and evaluate the processed data in real time whenever they like, either on a display at home or using a web portal. „*To achieve our climate targets, we need to save energy*", explains Kohnen, *"and the EWE Box helps to do that"*. Hans-Georg Bröggelhoff, one of the first wave of test customers who has been testing the EWE Box since 2008, agrees. *"Especially at the beginning, you look at the display a lot, which makes it easier for you to gauge how much energy your own appliances use"*, he reports before adding: *"the EWE Box made me more sensitive to the issue of energy"*.

However, the company's pioneering work is not complete with the market launch of the EWE Box. EWE is also paving the way for smart grids, the intelligent energy networks of the future. For example, the company's EWE Box is providing an important part of the metering and information infrastructure for the "eTelligence" project supported by the German government. In Cuxhaven, EWE and its partners are currently preparing for a field test involving 2,000 household customers. Intelligent energy gateways process the information from electronic electricity meters and make the households' consumption transparent. Thanks to the EWE Box, in future washing machines and dishwashers could be switched on exactly when the wind is blowing or the sun is shining, and plenty of energy is therefore available from renewable sources. The aim is to reduce the electricity price at such times in future, so that efficient consumption management also saves customers money.

"If we succeed in using or storing renewable energy when there is plenty of it available, i.e. when the sun is shining or the wind is blowing", explains Holzmann, "the energy revolution could succeed and the proportion of renewable energies in the electricity network could continue to grow unchecked". He commented that smart grids were an important prerequisite for this. *"We would like to acknowledge EWE's pioneering work in this area here and now",* he added. Holzmann went on to say that in the light of the current debate about electricity prices, saving energy would become essential in the future as this would be the only way to reduce costs sustainably. The transparency provided by intelligent technology made an important contribution to this, he said. In the medium term, pricing will also become more transparent with the introduction of variable load rates. Holzmann predicts that: *"In future, the electricity which is fed into the network when there are not enough renewables to cover the demand will be the most expensive – not the electricity which is generated from the wind or the sun".*

This is another reason why EWE AG is consistently moving towards making the best possible use of renewable energies with its latest forward-looking project. In conjunction with the Os-nabrück-based vehicle developer Karmann, the company has become the first energy supplier to present its own electric car. The aim is to use the test vehicles to establish how electric cars can be integrated into an intelligent energy network as a means of using and storing renewable energies.

About ecoIT

ecoIT is a project run by the non-profit organisation Deutsche Umwelthilfe e.V. Its primary goal is to take the subject of green IT beyond a highly technical discussion into the public and political domain. We want to provide transparent information and generate enthusiasm for the opportunities offered by technologies which make efficient use of resources and energy.

The background to the project is that, firstly, the ITC sector has already become a climate-relevant consumer of energy which is growing at an extraordinary rate. Secondly, there are already solutions available which can significantly reduce energy use in this area. In addition to this, ICT is a highly dynamic sector, where improvements can take effect very quickly.

Further information: www.projekt-ecoit.de and www.duh.de

About EWE AG

EWE ranks among Germany's largest energy services companies and is headquartered in Oldenburg in the federal state of Lower Saxony. The group's business activities comprise electricity, natural gas and water supply, energy and environmental technology as well as gas transmission and trade, telecommunication and information technology. EWE thus offers one-stop classic and innovative services. The EWE network infrastructure is characterized by high technical quality, security of supply and economically efficient operation. EWE was quick to develop its core competences to operate complex networks and to expand its comprehensive know-how in remote control and regulatory systems into a future-focused multi-service range of products. In addition to its activities in its home region in Northern Germany, EWE continues to expand its operations in Eastern Germany, Poland and Turkey. In 2008, the EWE Group employed around 5,300 people and recorded sales of €5.3 billion.

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