

How will it help?

Information Society and the Environment

How will it harm?

Information Technology revolution affects local and global environmental issues:

- *Impacts of IT equipment production:* Recent UNU research shows that 1.7 kg of fossil fuels and chemicals are needed to produce/use one tiny 2-gram memory chip.
- *What to do with waste IT equipment?* Hazardous substances; legislation mandating collection and recycling; risks for developing countries of importing waste equipment.
- *Economic growth and consumption increase due to IT:* In US, 10\$ of extra personal income stimulates 1 kg of extra fossil fuel use.
- *Potential environmental benefits:* significant energy savings possible from telecommuting; IT-enabled systems for more environmentally efficient use of products and services.
- *Helping developing nations:* Management of water/air quality through IT-enhanced monitoring, modeling and dissemination to reach a broad stakeholder base.

Environment is not on the agenda of the WSIS.

Should it be? This informal event, organized by United Nations University (UNU), will make the case that the Information Society is both:

- an important driver of environmental problems and negative trends,
- a key tool to overcome environmental challenges.

Event Agenda:

1. Overview of environmental benefits and impacts of IT
2. Impacts and management of IT hardware
3. Eco-efficiency: role of IT in dematerialization
4. Relationships between growth, consumption patterns and IT
5. The role of IT in enhancing environmental education
6. IT as a tool for environmental management in developing countries
7. Discussion

Further information:

IT and Environmental Issues Project
Email: itenv@hq.unu.edu
Tel: 81-3-5467-1352 Fax: 81-3-3406-7347
Website: www.it-environment.org

