ENERGY STAR Update

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
September 10, 2013

EPA Reports Dramatic Improvements in Game Console Energy Efficiency

Shortly after completing a broad stakeholder process to establish voluntary efficiency standards, all three major game console manufacturers have introduced next-generation boxes incorporating key elements of those ENERGY STAR standards. Consumers are already reaping the benefit of EPA's work with game console makers. Boxes from all three major manufacturers now feature power management capability as called for in EPA's voluntary standards, meaning they will go into a low-power sleep mode when not being used for game play or streaming videos.

COOL FACTS: Manufacturers are also re-setting Internet-connected consoles that are already in consumers' homes to enable power management features. Since EPA began engaging with manufacturers, consoles have seen a dip in energy consumption from 162W to 69W for the Xbox 360 and 181W to 58W for the PlayStation 3. If all game consoles sold in the United States met EPA's voluntary efficiency standard, the energy cost savings would grow to $1.6 billion each year, and 22 billion pounds of annual greenhouse gas emissions would be prevented, equivalent to the emissions from more than two million vehicles.

Game consoles have traditionally been single-function devices, delivering only video game play. Today's game consoles deliver many more functionalities, including streaming video in HD and 3D, browsing the web, and downloading apps, games, and media. As a result, they are on many more hours a day and can use much more power than consoles of long ago.

Many gamers do not realize how much energy their game consoles use. In 2008, an NRDC study found that game consoles consume an estimated 16 billion kWh per year—roughly equal to the annual electricity use of the City of San Diego. Recognizing the need to reduce energy use without diminishing the excitement of video game play, EPA worked with game console makers and efficiency advocates to develop efficiency standards for game consoles that resulted in significant savings.

Key features of the standards include specifications for powering down when not in use and playing and streaming media content in a power-wise manner, allowing users to enjoy a high-quality gaming experience for a fraction of the power of a standard game console. Bringing together the input and expertise of a range of stakeholders, these EPA ENERGY STAR voluntary standards will serve as a benchmark that can be leveraged by manufacturers and efficiency programs around the world to reduce game console energy use.

Products, homes and buildings that earn the ENERGY STAR label prevent greenhouse gas emissions by meeting strict energy efficiency requirements set by the U.S. EPA. In 2012 alone, Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, saved $24 billion on their utility bills and prevented greenhouse gas emissions equal to those of 50 million vehicles. From the first ENERGY STAR qualified computer in 1992, the ENERGY STAR label can now be found on products in more than 65 different categories, with more than 4.5 billion sold over the past 20 years. Over 1.4 million new homes and 20,000 facilities, including offices, schools, hospitals, and industrial plants, have earned the ENERGY STAR. For more information, visit www.energystar.gov.

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