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Current Renewable Energy Sharing Ready

for Prime Time

Written by John Barrie

Tuesday, 06 November 2007



[Current](#) is the winner of the 500,000 Euro Picnic Green sustainable technology challenge. Their technology is a decentralized renewable energy network. Here is how it works: A group of houses or businesses work cooperatively to generate renewable energy. One house may have a wind turbine, another solar panels, and another may have both. That group exchange energy locally to maximize efficiency. Rather than sending your surplus electrons through the grid, where up to 30% are lost, you share first with your neighbors in a Local Energy Network.

"*Current* has in fact developed computer controlled energy management for entire streets, through which the available energy can be optimized between all houses. That's a break-through.ö

Sir Richard Branson, 01.10.07

The *Current* design for a Local Energy Network is basically a mini-grid that is connected to the utility grid through just one connection. Surplus renewable electricity is first exchanged within the network members before being sold back to the grid. If the network as a whole isn't producing enough energy, then additional energy is brought in through the grid.

One cool feature of the *Current* system is the Qbox, a network interface device that knows energy rates and your particular energy needs. The Qbox can autonomously switch on your washing machine when it is most efficient, either when there is surplus energy in your Local Energy Network or when electric demand on the grid is low.

With prototype models already proven and a boost of 500,000 Euros, [Current](#) is ready for prime time, at least in Europe.

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30%!

written by [weee recycling](#), November 06, 2007

I had no idea the loss through the grid was that high. It's a staggeringly high amount and that's in Europe at 230V is it the same in the US with 110V?

That alone; even without the Qbox, sounds like a good reason they won the prize.

How to Build a Village

written by [The Nourisher](#), November 06, 2007

Have you heard of this new book. Step by Step guide to creating a carless village. I interviewed the author recently.

<http://nourishedmagazine.com.au/blog/articles/how-to-build-a-village-by-claude-lewenz>

Very inspiring man.

...

written by [Martin](#), November 07, 2007

That's a clever idea, and technologically very impressive.

I wonder how it would be used in reality - in other words, how would a Local Energy Network get formed? The website states that most such Local Energy Networks are privately owned, which makes sense, as I'm guessing that making such networks part of a national strategy would be a lot less efficient than upping the renewable energy contribution to the grid (30% losses or not, I'm guessing economies of scale would work in favour of larger-scale renewable generation). I suppose what Qurrent offers is a great opportunity for communities to band together and make a difference. I certainly wish them every success.

uhmmmm

written by ryan, November 11, 2007

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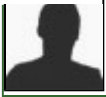
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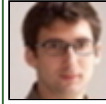
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