



Management

## Electronic firms pressed to go green

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Greenpeace has published a ranking of the world's most eco-friendly electronic firms.

The ranking is based on company policies and practices on toxic chemicals and recycling, as well as the energy efficiency of each company's products.

### Initiatives being marketed

**Christy Kulasingam**, technology director at Deloitte, explained that technology providers are increasingly being differentiated on the basis of their energy consumption, as has happened in a range of other sectors from white goods to motor vehicles, in response to the growing concern about the environment in general.

Technology companies are also starting to market, internally and externally, any major initiatives designed to save energy, such as Google's usage of solar energy to provide 1.6 megawatts of electricity for its headquarters.

**Kulasingam** pointed out that the environment provides both opportunities and pitfalls for the technology company leader who is willing to invest in this area.

On one hand, given the escalating worry over climate change, the technology sector should ensure it gets its case across, acknowledging where its consumption of energy is excessive and unwarranted.

On the other hand, the sector should also be able to point to where its impact is more positive overall.

### Energy usage

She warns that the technology sector should be wary of being made a scapegoat and of also becoming an apologist for its genuine faults.

"Device manufacturers should design products and their packaging with energy efficiency in mind. The consumer should be made more aware of energy usage at any point in time, for example by placing a simple indicator at the front of each device, showing power

consumption," **Kulasingam** said.

She warned that manufacturers should always be looking at ways to chip away at power consumption, such as by turning off screens, backlights, processors, hard drives when not in use and also by standardising peripherals such as chargers across all devices.

"Marketing around power consumption, however, should not focus solely on environmental impact. With the current price of oil likely to be maintained, business users and private consumers alike are likely to place greater emphasis on saving energy to lower bills, with saving the planet becoming an added bonus," she added.

### **Technological progress**

**Kulasingam** said that saving the world may boost some technology companies' bottom line, while the application of technology may answer some of the key environmental issues faced today.

Technological progress underlies the development of renewable energy, from solar to parasitic power. Technological advances have driven significant increases in fuel efficiency in all forms of transport, both through the creation of better engines as well as the use of lighter materials.

Technology has facilitated the design of more energy efficient buildings, such as the Swiss Re Tower in London, which incorporates features such as passive solar heating.

Combinations of technologies, such as PDAs, GPS and fleet management software can lessen unnecessary journeys and enable paperless operation.

"These are just a few examples of how technology can decrease reliance on energy while providing opportunities for companies to profit," **Kulasingam** concluded.

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