Low-tech server | Photo source Low-Tech Magazine

Innovation > Telecommunications > New low-tech website runs on solar power

NEW LOW-TECH WEBSITE RUNS ON SOLAR POWER

🇪🇸 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

A magazine has developed a low-tech website that uses only solar power.

People rarely stop to consider the energy usage of the Internet. However, being connected constantly requires more servers, more content, more memory and more energy. It is estimated that by 2025 the Internet will account for 20 percent of all the energy consumed on the planet. At Springwise, we have seen a number of ways to increase energy efficiency. These include a platform that reduces the carbon footprint of coding and a blockchain that rewards energy efficiency. Now, one online magazine is raising awareness of the issue with a low-tech website.

Low-Tech Magazine has redesigned its website to use a minimum amount of technology and energy. The site uses solar power and consists of static documents stored on a single, self-hosted server. The magazine's founder, Kris deDecker, redesigned the website to use a server powered by a photovoltaic array on his Barcelona balcony. So if it is cloudy, the site goes offline.

The site contains no ads, videos or pop-ups and does not use cookies, track visitors, or profile users. To compress images Low-Tech Magazine employs an older form of compression called dithering so images are less power-intensive. A battery metre shows readers exactly how much energy they are using. Since the site is static, pages download around 10 times faster than on other sites. The low resource requirements and open design also keeps the site accessible for visitors with older computers or less reliable Internet connections. Additionally, low-cost equipment like a mini-computer provides running power, and requires no more processing power than that of a mobile phone.

Takeaway:

Low-Tech Magazine "highlights the potential of past knowledge and technologies for designing a sustainable society". By challenging an always-on culture, they may also be pointing a way for businesses to save energy by nudging users to demand less. Will people be willing to wean themselves from an always-on, instant access Internet?