

EPA Green Enterprise

Project: UL Green IT Strategy

Organisation: University of Limerick • Reference: 2016-ET-CP-80



Project Objective: To improve the resource and energy efficiency of IT equipment on campus across each stage of the product life cycle.

Amount Of Grant Aid Awarded: €55,918

Background:

The University of Limerick (UL) has developed and implemented the first national plan to improve the resource efficiency of IT usage across an entire campus, for staff and students. This plan encompasses the environmental performance of IT across all aspects of its lifecycle including manufacture, usage, and end of life.



Practices employed at different stages of the IT lifecycle to minimise environmental impact:

Focus	Manufacture	Energy Use	Circular economy activities
Staff	Procurement policies	Energy management of staff computers. Data centre energy management. Cloud utilisation.	Platform for internal re-use of equipment. Send for data destruction/refurbishment and donation. Spring clean WEEE collection events.
Students	Availability of refurbished equipment	Energy management of student computer clusters	Repair cafes. End of semester WEEE collection events.

Project activities:

- A successful two month pop-up shop was run at the start of the academic year to provide refurbished and affordable IT equipment to the campus community, selling over 150 items.
- Data centre energy efficiency, measured in PUE (power usage effectiveness), was improved through simple design measures and plans developed to continue its improvement through evidence based temperature adjustments.
- Energy management of staff computers and student computer clusters was improved through a default enabling of sleep mode on monitors and desk tops after a period of inactivity.
- Repair events were held on campus to encourage and educate students on lifetime extension of personal electronics; in this case iPhones which were fixed for free.



Project Outcomes:

- Implementation of Green Public Procurement (GPP) criteria was identified as the most effective way to incorporate sustainable decision making in future IT equipment tenders.
- Identified the cloud as offering better energy and resource efficiency than local hosting.
- Revived the take-back system for certain procured IT equipment at end of life, under extended producer responsibility.
- Raised awareness of 'For Sale or Wanted' staff forum for free IT equipment exchanges within the university.
- WEEE collection events held for both staff and students resulted in 20 cages of WEEE collected and sent for recycling.
- Routine WEEE collection was established for equipment not falling under the take back system.

A short 'How to Green your IT' guide was prepared.



Photo: Green IT pop-up shop

Next steps needed:

Ongoing energy consumption and CO₂ emissions reduction through moving appropriate services to the cloud while considering GDPR and other security challenges.

For more on the EPA's Green Enterprise programme visit [here](#)

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