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# WATT'S UP?



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## Is Phantom Power costing you money?

As someone interested in saving energy and managing your electricity costs, you probably are pretty diligent about turning off lights and electronic equipment when they're not in use.

So it will probably surprise you to learn that, despite your efforts, many of your "powered off" appliances that remain plugged into power sources are still drawing electric current – wasting energy and costing you money.



According to Discovery Communications (parent company of the Discovery Channel), this "phantom load" accounts for about 5% of an individual home's energy use. These "power vampires" include both large and small devices, such as kitchen appliances, home entertainment electronics, computer systems, clocks and cell phone chargers.

**In fact, studies estimate that the amount of energy Americans waste in this "standby" power could light up, heat, and cool the homes of two-thirds of the planet.\***

### Consider these facts:

- According to the U.S. Department of Energy, in the average home, 75% of the electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the products are "turned off."
- Every year, Americans pay more than \$750 million for electricity used by televisions that are turned off. This number can only climb as more and more of us upgrade to LCD TVs, which use 75% more power – and plasma TVs a stunning three times more – than traditional cathode-ray tube sets.\*\*
- According to Future Forests, only 5% of the power drawn by cell phone chargers is actually used to charge the phones. The remaining 95% is lost to phantom load when these chargers remain plugged into the wall when the phones are not charging.

### Now, what can you do about it?

The obvious answer is to unplug appliances when you are not using them. That's easy with cell phone chargers, coffee machines, and electric toothbrushes, but you need a more convenient tactic for your TV and computer systems.

A good solution is provided by the new "smart" power strips. Now available for under \$40, these power-savers monitor consumption and actually sense the difference between when the electronics are operating and when they are powered off or in standby mode. Some models also feature built-in surge protectors that guard your appliances against damaging power strikes and transient surges. For more information on smart power strips, [click here](#).

We hope this information helps you better manage your future electricity usage.  
Thank you for your continuing participation in the ComEd Residential Real-Time Pricing Program.

Sincerely,

Katie Papadimitriou  
ComEd RRTP Program Manager  
theWattSpot.com

\* Source: cnet.com  
\*\* Source: UsNews.com

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