

# Making ICT Green

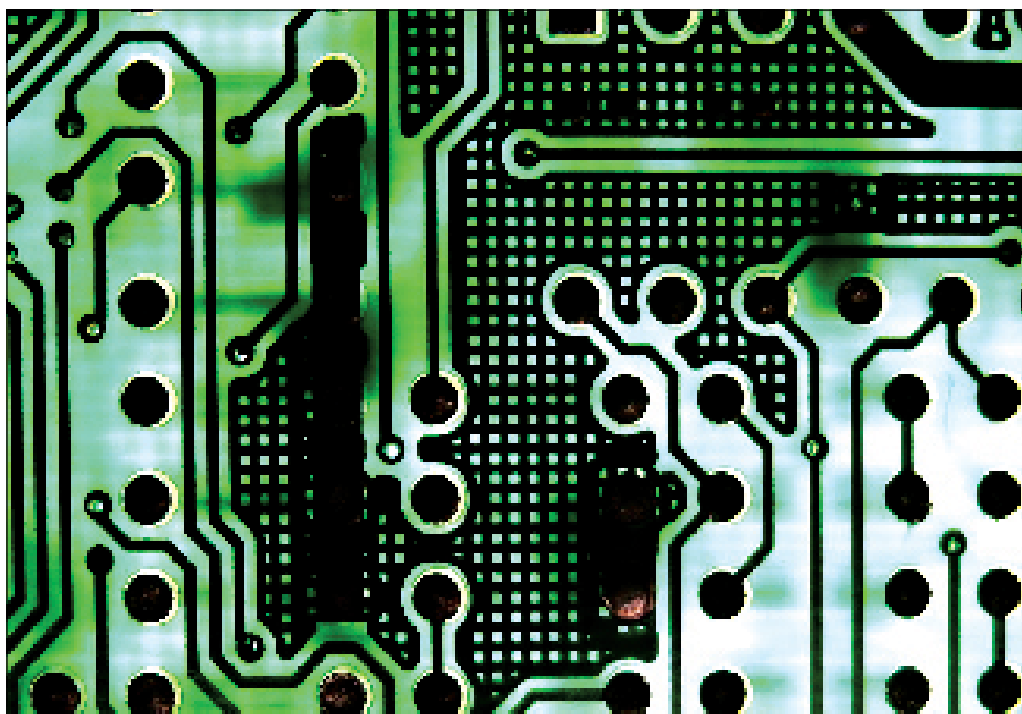
The EAUC has recently launched its new Green ICT Community of Practice (COP). So, to celebrate the launch and explain the increasing need for more efficient information services, we asked COP Convenor *Gaurav Malik* and his colleague *Mike Kretsis* from the University of East London to discuss the benefits of Green ICT

→ It may come as a surprise to readers that global ICT operations account for two per cent of worldwide, man-made CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This level of emissions is similar to that of the airline industry, an industry which is increasingly attracting the attentions of environmental groups and campaigners.

Quite clearly, the higher and further education sector here in the UK is responsible for only a very small proportion of those emissions. However, there are a number of pressing reasons why we should look very closely at the ways we can increase the efficiency of our sector's ICT and reduce the levels of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Efficiency gains are not just good for the environment; they also make sound business sense. ICT operations represent a significant overhead for institutions, and increased efficiency can lead to reduced costs at a time when financial purse strings are extremely tight.

But saving money is only one of a number of Green ICT drivers. There are an increasing number of EU directives and other pieces of legislation that require our compliance. For example, the WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Directive requires businesses and organisations to dispose of ICT equipment in an environmentally responsible way, and the EU Batteries Directive asks that all organisations that sell in excess of 32kg per year of portable batteries to



provide a take-back facility. As a result, the University of East London has been operating a successful take-back scheme for a number of years.

With the launch of the Green League university tables, we also need to consider the green standing of our institutions. In an increasingly competitive marketplace for students, we cannot ignore the

fact that environmental issues are very important to young people and a higher ranking within the Green League table can only have a positive impact on recruitment. Yes, greener ICT operations are only one part of an overall environmental strategy, but they are an important part.

At the University of East London, we recently conducted a project, funded by the Joint Information Services Committee (JISC), entitled 'Printing Efficiently and Greener'. The overall aim of the project was to investigate how barriers to Green ICT could be overcome through cross-departmental working. The project led to a significant decrease in both the number of institutional printing devices and the amount of printing, helping us reduce our costs and our environmental impact.

The lessons of the project are clear. Greening ICT operations does not necessarily require technological solutions. Sometimes what is required is nothing more than a change in organisational culture and behaviour. ●

**For more information on the Green ICT COP and the other EAUC Communities of Practice, please visit: [www.eauc.org.uk/communities\\_of\\_practice](http://www.eauc.org.uk/communities_of_practice)**

## EAUC Communities of Practice

**The new Green ICT group is the EAUC's fifth Community of Practice (COP). To encourage more specialist learning and information sharing throughout the sector, we have created a range of Community of Practices to support focused and efficient networking.**

**These networks provide a place for like-minded sustainability professionals to come together to discuss the issues and ideas relevant to them and their area of responsibility. By asking questions and sharing information amongst their peers, COP Members are able to exchange ideas, skills and experience.**

**Members of these groups have told us how much they value these networks and the real**

**benefits they receive from being included. As a result, we are looking to further widen our range of EAUC Communities of Practice in the future. Our current COPs include:**

- Green ICT (EAUC Members only)
- Embedding Positive Attitudes and Behaviours (EAUC Members only)
- Carbon Intensive Research Colleges and Universities (EAUC Members only)
- Transport Planning Network (EAUC Members only)
- Sustainability in Higher Education Developers (SHED) - in partnership with Higher Education Academy