

Students win for energy saving tips for computers

CONFIGURATION CHANGE: By simply switching a PC's setting to standby mode if it's idle for more than 700 seconds, schools can save a lot on power bills, they said

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Young people can help reduce the nation's carbon emissions by 3.5 million tonnes annually by making a simple configuration change to their personal computers, a group of university students said yesterday, adding that combined with other energy-saving habits, they can play a role in combating global warming.

The students from National Chiao Tung University's Display Institute had formulated a set of configuration statistics that won the Climate Change, Time for Action challenge — a competition to design concrete energy-saving

proposals organized by China Life Insurance Co (中國人壽) for people aged 15 to 24.

"Universities and tertiary educational institutions accounted for 1.29 percent of Taiwan's energy consumption, which cost the schools about NT\$2 billion [US\$64.1 million] in electricity bills," said Jhang Geng-wei (張耿維), the leader of the five-student team.

Jhang and his team decided to focus on reducing power consumption by computers, as most students own a computer and the machines account for a large percentage of the electricity used in schools.

"We observed that although av-

erage usage for each computer is about eight hours a day, the machines are left running for another 16 hours. Students leave them on because they don't want to wait for the computers to boot up whenever they want to use them and because electricity is already included in our tuition," Jhang said.

However, Jhang and his team discovered that they could reconfigure the computer through the control panel to go into "standby" mode after 700 seconds of idle time, thereby decreasing power usage by 80 percent, Jhang said.

"And if it goes into hibernation after 20 minutes, 97.5 percent of its running power can be saved," he said.

Under such conditions, 4.68 units of electricity can be saved per day per computer, Jhang said. Assuming "1,700 units can be saved

each year, that could cut annual electricity bills by NT\$5,040."

"This means that if the nation's 3.29 million young people were to use this simple configuration, 5.5 billion units of electricity could be saved, which translates to a 3.56 million-tonne reduction in carbon emissions," he said.

But placing one's computer on energy-saving settings is not the only thing that young people can do for the earth, the students said.

"[For example,] the Environmental Protection Administration has been promoting the concept of bringing your own chopsticks when eating out ... Taiwanese use approximately 1 billion pairs of disposable chopsticks each year. By bringing our own, we can help reduce that number," said Sun Guo-pei (孫國暉), a member of the team.