



WHAT'S THE MOST ENERGY-EFFICIENT WAY TO WATCH TV?

There seem to be more choices than ever for how to watch TV shows, movies, and videos at home. But the amount of energy needed to watch video content—and the amount of money you spend to watch it—can vary widely depending on which device you choose to use.

Among the devices used to watch TV, set-top boxes are the most prolific; they're also huge energy consumers. According to a recent report from the National Resources Defense Council <http://www.nrdc.org/energy/files/settopboxes.pdf> (PDF), the average residential set-top box configuration uses nearly 450 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of energy annually—more than a new Energy Star-qualified refrigerator! What's more, most of us are stuck with whatever equipment our cable or satellite provider gives us, so we don't have a choice about whether we get an energy-efficient model or not. On a positive note, groups like the ENERGY STAR® program are working with manufacturers to develop new types of set-top boxes that use less energy. It's unclear, however, when we'll start seeing these new devices in the mainstream consumer marketplace.

DVD or Blu-ray players are another popular way to watch movies, but the energy use associated with using these devices varies dramatically. Stand-alone DVD players are typically the most efficient, drawing around 10 watts of power (a little less than a standard compact fluorescent lamp) when in use. In contrast, a stand-alone Blu-ray player can draw over 3 times as much power, and a video game console can use 15 times as much power.

Finally, many people now stream video content on an Internet-enabled TV or through a separate box such as an Apple TV, Roku, or Google TV. Although there isn't yet much conclusive research, preliminary reports suggest that streaming is actually the most efficient way to watch movies or TV shows, especially since some streaming boxes draw as little as 3 watts of power when in use. That's less than one-third the power of a DVD player and one-tenth the power of a standard set-top box!

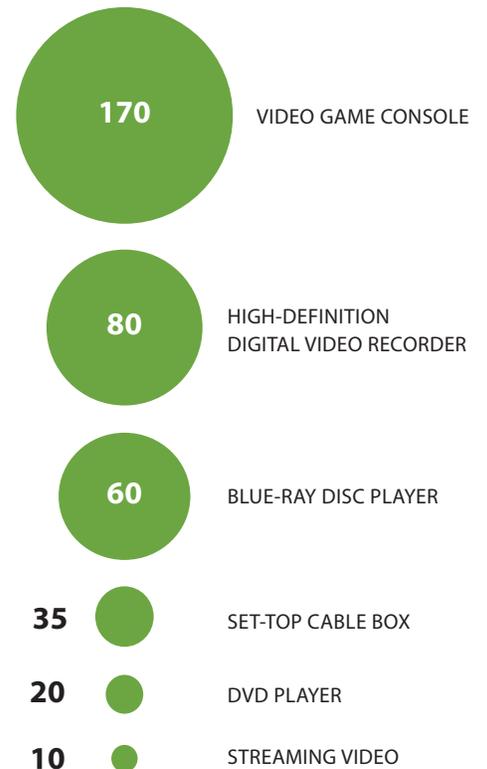
All of these facts point to several easy steps that you can take to save energy while still enjoying your favorite movies and TV shows. First, make sure to turn off the set-top box and digital video recorder when not in use (as long as you can do so without interrupting your scheduled recordings!). Next, watch movies on a DVD or Blu-ray player instead of a gaming console. Finally, when possible, choose a streaming service to watch videos; this option wastes the least amount of electricity. Now you can enjoy your popcorn and a movie worry free, knowing you're doing something good for your wallet and for the environment.



HOW MUCH ENERGY DOES IT TAKE TO WATCH A MOVIE?

Recent research suggests that video streaming is by far the most energy-efficient way to watch TV shows or movies. In contrast, when used to watch movies, video game consoles are major energy hogs. Compared with a dedicated streaming box, a video game console can increase energy expenses by a factor of more than 20.

ENERGY CONSUMED IN WATT-HOURS TO WATCH A TWO-HOUR MOVIE



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