

Nick Doe, *Anti-smart meter 'facts' deceitful*, Flying Shingle, p.5, October 31, 2011.

Dear Editor

While there is no question that BC Hydro's smart metering program calls for broad-ranging discussion on a number of issues—economics, privacy, health, social, and the manner of its introduction—the current public debate is rapidly being drained of all rationality. In public forums, “facts” are being bandied about that are not just inaccurate, they are downright deceitful. Some of the technical arguments being used against deployment of these meters are ludicrous. Much of this misinformation appears to stem from websites in California where the aim appears to be to scare people, not educate them. Some of the oft-parroted “facts” pay no regard to accuracy, antiquity, or applicability to the BC Hydro system.

Practically all of the health-related data being promoted, now approaching ten years old, comes from Magda Havas, Henry Lai, and the late Neil Cherry, a small group of contrarians whose specialty is promoting studies that are in conflict with mainstream scientific opinion. They do so in a pseudo-scientific manner: selecting results that support their claims while ignoring those that don't; failing to provide additional evidence to support their claims as time passes; using the results of experiments that investigations have shown were flawed; and so on.

One example of a Californian source is a video entitled “The Dark Side of ‘Smart’ Meters” in which a conspiracy-theorist, claiming to be a microwave expert, get his “facts” so muddled it is hard to believe that they are just mistakes. He presents a free-space dipole radiation pattern as being typical of a smart meter. Doesn't he know that the meters have a metal box and wall on their backsides? Radiation into the house will be a thousand times less than it is in the forward direction.

He suggests some meters could be transmitting continuously—a 100 per cent duty cycle. Doesn't he know, apart from the fact that no wide area network (WAN) could possibly sustain such a rate, that measurements by Electric Power Research Institute of real working meters have shown duty cycles of 0.04 per cent?

He claims that radiation 92 feet away will be dangerous. Hasn't he done the calculation that shows at that distance the power density of the meter's radiation will be about ten microwatts per square metre—a level so low that you'd have to be frightened of your own shadow to consider it hazardous?

Doesn't he know that the International Agency for Research on Cancer, in classifying radiation as a Class 2B “maybe” hazard, is talking about cell-phone radiation directly into frequent-users' heads that is, cumulatively, hundreds of thousands times greater than will be experienced by people who habitually hang around electricity meters. Don't other experts know that the system uses spread-spectrum technology and 128 bit-Advanced Encryption Standard encryption that would keep “any hacker worth his/her salt” busy for decades? Aren't they aware that magnetic fields generated by our present electro-mechanical meters are also classified as a Class 2B hazard?

Don't they know that BC Hydro has said it has no interest in gathering usage profiles, and that doing so and selling them to commercial interests would almost certainly be illegal in Canada?

Don't they know that van der Waals forces are so weak they are easily broken by infra-red electromagnetic radiation in our bodies that is there just because we are warm? Don't they know that a photon of radiation at the meters' 900 MHz operating frequency is a million times less energetic than a photon of radiation from the moon? Don't they know that in about 40 double-blind studies of electro-sensitive individuals, not a single individual has demonstrated an ability to tell whether a transmitter is on or off?

Don't they know that if you have interactive digital TV, SHAW is monitoring what you watch? Don't they know that assertions that 35% of the population is electro-sensitive are based on an old Swedish study reported by whom else but Magda Havas?

Dearest editor. What is the point of engineers conscientiously studying all the technical issues for years, making proposals to make the system more secure, gearing up for the time when alternative energy sources will be common and people will want to trade energy back and forth, encouraging people to do their laundry at night when demand is low thereby obviating the need to buy dirty power from Alberta or the US, making better matches between available supply and demand thereby freeing up capacity—what is the point of doing all this, when all they need do to find accurate information is go to the nearest Californian website or local politician?

I give up; it's all male-cow faeces. Maybe we should just let the postmodern philosophers build us a system instead.

Simplistically and sincerely yours:

Nick Doe P.Eng., B.Sc. (hons.), ACGI, DIC (failed), owner of a UCLA T-shirt. ◇

Anyone wanting more technical information on radiation levels from smart meters might want to start at: <http://www.nickdoe.ca/pdfs/Webp659.pdf>

Electromagnetic radiation and health issues are also addressed in <http://www.emfandhealth.com> .