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Consumers Want, and Are Skeptical About, Eco-Electronics

By [Joe Hutsko](#)

But is it environmentally friendly? (Photo: Julien Jourdes for The New York Times)

Among other findings from a survey released today by the [Consumer Electronics Association](#), an industry group representing computer and gadget manufacturers, 89 percent of consumers said that energy efficiency would be a factor in choosing their next television — even as less than half of the 960 people surveyed said they're generally able to make sense of the environmental attributes attached to electronics on the market.

“One of the greatest challenges certainly is consumer confusion about what ‘green’ means,” said Parker Brugge, the C.E.A.’s vice president of environmental affairs.

Mr. Brugge said the lack of a universally recognized means to measure a product’s “greenness” makes it difficult for consumers to find information at the point of purchase.

The survey also found that while 74 percent of consumers polled say companies should do more to protect the environment, only 17 percent feel familiar with the environmental reputation and philosophy of companies who make and sell electronics.

More than 50 percent of consumers believe some companies overstate the environmental friendliness of their products in order to sell more.

“There needs to be more consumer education and effective communication on the part of manufacturers and retailers,” Mr. Brugge said.

While 25 percent of respondents said they felt comfortable with the “green” jargon attached to various electronic products, 38 percent said they were confused by the the eco-friendly messages. Roughly 51 percent of respondents said they don’t always believe what they see or read about eco-friendly products.

Tim Herbert, the C.E.A.’s senior director of market research, said that although consumers are confused by the green credentials of various electronics, “the key takeaway is the growing importance of ‘green’ in consumers’ purchasing decisions.”

