

# 'Inlet Outlet' Lets Users Give Power Back To Wall Sockets

March 2 2009, by Lisa Zyga

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The "inlet outlet" allows users to give power back to the grid to counteract energy consumption. Image credit: Carla Diana and Jeff Hoefs, Smart Design.

(PhysOrg.com) -- Ever wish you could power your home's electrical appliances with the energy you generate on your exercise bike? A new concept called an "inlet outlet" could allow homeowners to put power from kinetic household activities - such as exercise equipment - back into the grid through a wall socket, helping to lower electricity bills. Basically, the inlet outlet would be the opposite of a typical wall outlet.

The concept was one of 50 finalists at this year's Greener Gadgets Design Competition, which was held last Friday, February 27, in New

York City, and is sponsored by the Consumer Electronics Association. Designed by Carla Diana and Jeff Hoefs of Smart Design, the inlet outlet concept includes adapter kits that convert common household products into energy-generating devices compatible with the inlet outlets.

Besides exercise equipment, sources of reusable energy could include things like a refrigerator or gas oven/range, which generate heat that could be captured by a panel and converted into electricity. In addition, motion is everywhere: a welcome mat that is constantly stepped on, an outdoor trampoline, and a flag in the wind all generate kinetic energy that could be converted into electricity and fed back into the grid through the inlet outlet. No matter how small, inlet energy could counteract some of the energy consumed.

The designers hope that, if the inlet outlet plugs and adapters are easy to use, the system could encourage further development of household devices that can be used to generate electricity.

The inlet outlet was just one of many innovative eco concepts at the competition, and didn't make the top 10. Based on audience feedback and live judging, a concept called the Tweet-a-Watt - a power meter that wirelessly publishes your power usage on your Twitter page - won first place. The Power-Hog, a piggy bank that monitors power consumption, won second place.

More information:

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