

# **SOLAR PANELS MAY BE RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCE**

Energy is something people see all over the world. It is used in hospitals, houses, cars, restaurants, computer technology, lighting, heating. Everything humanity relies on has some basis in energy. However, fossil fuels and the energy provided by them and other energy sources, are slowly wearing down. It might be time to start considering solar panels as a renewable energy source.

The energy of fossil fuels as a power source is derived from burning the fuel, which is rich in hydro-carbons. Taken from organic materials found in the earth, the fuel is burned and used to create steam. It's this steam that turns turbine engines, which in turn create electricity. Electricity is used around the world. Fossil fuels are a limited supply power source and have the unfortunate effect of polluting the earth.

Solar panels offer a source of renewable energy by taking the energy of the sun. Because suns in general have such very long life spans, the energy taken from the sun is reliable and almost permanent. A solar panel uses the energy it absorbs to create electricity, the same power that fossil fuels provide.

Each individual solar panel is made up of solar cells. These are also called photovoltaic cells. In a general sense of the process, photovoltaic cells collect the sun's energy, cleanly and efficiently, and turn it into useable electricity as a power source.

Within the density of the gas of the sun, there are thermonuclear explosions going on constantly. Hydrogen atoms fuse with helium atoms, and the explosions that result give off radiation. This radiation streams toward the earth and is caught up by the photovoltaic cells of a solar panel. A panel at the equator of the earth, measuring one fifth of a meter, will turn the sun's energy into two amps of two volt electrical power. Solar cells that are on space craft above the earth's atmosphere are even more effective at capturing energy.

Solar panels are most often made of crystalline silicon. However, they can also be made from amorphous silicon, which allows thinner panels and more efficiency in the collection of energy. The highest efficiency solar panels are made from gallium arsenide, which requires a process of creation called molecular beam epitaxy. An expensive process, it results in panels that can't be used for every day purposes.

Plastic can be used in the creation of solar panels. If it were used more commonly, solar cells could for example be layered over a laptop's screen. This would allow the computer to have almost constant power from light and the sun. Unfortunately, the plastic solar cells only put out about eleven percent of the energy normal solar cells do.

People are becoming more and more conscious about how to make less of an impact on the earth and how to leave less of a footprint in the earth's ecology. Choosing cleaner and more efficient energy sources is one way that people can do this.

Solar energy gathered using solar panels allows people to still have the same convenience of electricity, without pollution. There is enough light that comes to the earth from the sun every single day to power the world for an entire year.

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