

Joint Press Release

Vodafone and E.ON launch technology partnership: Saving resources with smart water meters

Every 30 seconds, a water pipe bursts in Germany: In 2019 alone, there were 1.1 million cases of tap water damage. The costs added up to over three billion euros. Vodafone and E.ON want to change this – with the help of smart water meters and the Internet of Things.

The digitalisation group Vodafone and the energy company E.ON are launching a cross-industry innovation and technology partnership to detect tap water damage much earlier and thus conserve resources. The new digital technology is installed directly in the water meter and receives or transmits data via the existing mobile network. It is being used immediately in first companies and facilities in the Ruhr region. As part of their partnership, E.ON and Vodafone are planning to use the technology in a similar form for electricity and gas meters in the future. The aim here is also to save resources, detect damage at an early stage and offer new services for consumers.

“Sustainability succeeds when we use digitalisation wisely,” explains Vodafone Germany CEO Hannes Ametsreiter. “Digital technologies and the Internet of Things are the key to achieving our climate goals. They help us to use valuable resources such as water and energy responsibly and to save emissions. On the factory floors, on our streets, in the entire energy cycle and with smart water meters in our basements.”

“For climate neutrality to succeed, sustainability and digitalisation must go hand in hand,” says Leonhard Birnbaum, Chairman of the E.ON Board of Management. “Both the energy industry and the telecommunications industry are facing a decade of disruptive change. It is not enough to maintain the status quo. To make decisive progress in digitalisation and sustainability, we need new smart solutions, strong partnerships and shared visions across industry boundaries.”

From now on, Vodafone and E.ON are equipping water meters with intelligent wireless technology. The installed smart meters detect irregularities in water consumption and thus reliably indicate possible line damage at a particularly early stage. This enables rapid intervention and avoids expensive renovations at the customer's premises. On the Internet of Things, all data and error messages are transmitted to the users via the mobile network. Almost 200 networked water meters are in use, at around 30 locations right at the start of the new technology. Another 1,000 smart meters are to be installed by the beginning of 2023. The new technology can be retrofitted to existing water meters with a few simple steps via 'plug and play', so no replacement is required.

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“We want to exploit the full potential of digitalisation for the operation of critical infrastructure. The partnership with Vodafone accelerates this process. A prerequisite for this is also that the data is processed professionally, securely and intelligently. This way, we achieve the greatest possible benefit for customers and companies,” says Victoria Ossadnik, Board Member for Digital at E.ON.

In the future, the technology will also be used on a large scale in private households. With the “Water Heroes” app, users will then be able to keep track of all their water consumption data on their smartphone and be alerted directly if any damage occurs.

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