

# Smart metering – a long route ahead to our destination

A short year ago we – and probably many of you as well – were of the opinion that 2008 would see many significant decisions being taken to clear the way for the introduction of new technologies for the transmission of domestic metering data in real time. However, this was to be the case to only a very limited extent. Indeed, in the Netherlands and Great Britain the original time schedules for the introduction of smart metering have actually been ditched and the date set for the final decision has been postponed by around two years. Nevertheless, postponed is not the same as cancelled, even if two major potential trendsetters are now hesitating.

It is not the omnipresent global financial crisis which has influenced these two completely separate decisions. The reason for this is found instead in the fact that there is still too much uncertainty surrounding the exact way in which the solutions to this problem are to be presented and specified. The consequences associated with starting out under the wrong assumptions are simply too great for them to be swept aside without due consideration, leaving the consumer to foot the bill. There is no doubt that the total of all of the elements of the bill for energy supplies must in the final analysis be paid by the consumer, as must the costs of installing 'smart' energy meters. Accordingly, the consumer is entitled to know that these investments are reasonable and commercially viable from his point of view. In this situation there is as little call for monuments of what is technically possible as there is for solutions lacking essential features – possibly even in terms of safety – just because someone has taken the red pen to them. At present there is no-one who can accurately identify how wide or narrow the ridge path to be walked actually is.

As we gathered from the great interest displayed by visitors at the Metering Europe event in Amsterdam, however, the areas of uncertainty still in evidence are not preventing anyone from intensively addressing the topic of 'smart metering'. Quite the opposite: due to the modularity of Elster's latest developments, solution approaches determined hitherto can be optimised and, if necessary, streamlined in the course of the inevitable learning process. At the same time, our solutions are aimed at providing you with security of investment, keeping the cost of installation down, while still maintaining a high level of flexibility and long service life. Under such peripheral conditions, the process of setting out on the smart metering route is considerably simpler and the opportunities for adaptation are just as varied as the installation conditions in each case. While this does not turn the above-mentioned ridge walk into a stroll in the park, it does mean that the path is broader and considerably safer to follow. However, even the longest journey begins with a single step. Contact us, and our specialists will be happy to explain the various possibilities, before proposing the most appropriate solution for yourselves and your individual circumstances.

But before that, we would like to thank you for the faith you have continued to place in us in 2008 and wish you every success, and successful decision-making, in 2009.

With our very best wishes,



Peter Hampel  
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