

# Changing a paradigm

Normally, a paradigm change refers to a radical change in perspective in a particular scientific field. One big paradigm change, for example, was the abandonment of the view of the Earth as a flat disc, instigated by Aristotle.

Paradigm changes occur as follows: to start with, there is always the visionary draft of an idea, followed by an implementation phase, during which the new has to assert itself as the "old" gradually becomes less common. In this manner the "old", with its limited possibilities, moves to the edge of the spectrum.

The energy sector is currently roughly at this point with regard to the implementation of smart metering. This change is being governed by legal requirements. Admittedly, some care is required, because technical paradigm changes do not simply fall from the sky, but require time. Inordinate action has no place in discussions surrounding the roll-out of smart meters throughout Europe and with it the replacement of approx. 250 million electricity meters and about 100 million gas meters. What needs time more than anything else are the new technologies that will be used in the future in massive numbers, where we are working daily towards their standardization.

Questions that are often put to our sales colleagues these days are: do you have gas meters, which communicate via M-Bus? Cable-based and wireless? The answer is given roughly as follows and to some extent it illustrates the dilemma: yes, our units can communicate via M-Bus. Cable-based and wireless! Which variant did you have in mind? At the moment, a wide range of M-Bus standard variants are in use, with the trend on the increase.

Add to this the fact that hardly any piece of technology these days is more short-lived than wireless systems. Consequently, smart meters need to be as flexible as possible as regards their communication technology. We are all well aware that flexibility does not come cheap. The alternative: a cheap ticket to a dead-end.

In this issue of Elster Profiles, you will find solutions that take these trends into consideration and will allow you to make future-proof investments. New technologies and new functionalities, combined with the million times tried and tested volumetric measuring principle of the diaphragm meter.

It already involves a degree of entrepreneurial bravery to develop products under the current general conditions. If we look just at 2009 and 2010, Elster GmbH is bringing more products onto the market (relating to diaphragm meters) than in the last ten years put together. Undoubtedly these are investments in the future, but they are also a bit of a gamble.

We hope that this issue will encourage you to invest as well and sharpen your eye for what is essential. We would like to give you an overview of our various activities – not just in terms of products – so that smart metering and ultimately the vision of smart grids may become a reality.

One more thing: paradigms may change, but one thing remains certain: gas molecules prefer to be measured by Elster gas meters.



Carsten Lorenz  
Head of AMR/AMM Systems & Projects  
Elster GmbH



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Elster GmbH  
55252 Mainz-Kastel, Germany  
www.elster-instromet.com

#### Editorial staff:

Gudrun Biedermann, Elster Germany  
Paul Webster, Elster Instromet UK  
Jack Cheng, Elster-Instromet Singapore  
Nick Williams, Elster Instromet UK

#### Please write to:

Europe/Africa/America/Australia:  
Elster GmbH  
Gudrun Biedermann  
Steinern Strasse 19–21  
55252 Mainz-Kastel, Germany  
T +49 (6134) 6 05-2 18  
E gudrun.biedermann@elster.com

#### Asia:

Elster-Instromet Sdn. Bhd. (Singapore Branch)  
Jack Cheng  
160 Paya Lebar Road  
#04-01 Orion@Paya Lebar  
Singapore 409022  
T +65 62477728  
E jcheng@elster-instromet.com.sg

#### England:

Elster Metering Ltd.  
Steve Case  
Tollgate Business Park  
Beaconside, Stafford  
Staffordshire ST16 3HS, England  
T +44 1785 275306  
E steve.case@gb.elster.com

#### Authors:

Hans Arp, Germany  
Heinrich Bertke, Germany  
Patrick Keiffer, Germany  
Ernst Kiel, EnergyICT Germany  
Paul Ladage, Germany  
Klaus Landwehr, Germany  
Carsten Lorenz, Germany  
Guido Temme, Germany  
Michael Tiede, Germany  
Michel van Wezel, the Netherlands  
Elinor Zhang, SEAGE Shanghai

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