

Method for Approving ICT Solutions as Environmentally Conscious

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(Manuscript received February 17, 2005)

Fujitsu Laboratories has developed an environmental burden assessment method for approving information and communication technology (ICT) solutions as environmentally conscious solutions. By separating environmental burdens into eight root factors (e.g., resource consumption, human transportation, and waste generation), this method estimates environmental burdens before and after an ICT solution is introduced. One particular characteristic of this method is that changes in operating efficiency, documentation space, and equipment floor space due to ICT introductions are collectively represented as changes in office space. We used this method to evaluate how various ICT solutions have reduced environmental burdens. We found that, of the eight factors, the biggest reductions in environmental burden in most cases were due to office-space reductions, which reduced working person-hours and therefore energy consumption.

1. Introduction

When the Kyoto Protocol enters into effect on 16th February 2005, the countries of the world will become more actively engaged in efforts to prevent global warming. Although Japan is committed to a 6% decrease in greenhouse-gas emissions between 2008 and 2012 compared to the 1990 level, Japan actually increased its emissions by about 8% in 2002. Clearly, the goal is not easy to meet.

Through information and communication technology (ICT) products and solutions, Fujitsu is adopting an environmental policy that will help its customers reduce their environmental burdens and improve their environmental efficiency. Aiming at concrete measures, we have established a system for approving environmentally-conscious solutions that effectively reduce environmental burdens.¹⁾ This paper explains our environmental burden assessment method, which is the

cornerstone of this approval system.

To examine the possibility of reducing environmental burdens by introducing ICT, we developed the assessment method mentioned above.²⁾⁻⁶⁾ This method estimates environmental burdens before and after the introduction of a solution based on eight factors (e.g., resource consumption, human transportation, and waste generation). One particular characteristic of this method is that it collectively represents changes in operating efficiency, paperwork, and equipment floor-space in terms of changes in office space.

This paper describes the concept behind the assessment method and describes its use in two case studies: one for a materials-procurement service and another for an electronic administration service for local authorities. It then describes a trend analysis of reductions in environmental burdens that are achieved by implementing various solutions.

2. Environmental burden assessment method for software and services

This method evaluates how the software and services of ICT solutions affect environmental burdens in terms of CO₂ emissions and quantifies how changes made by solutions to eight selected factors affect environmental burdens. The first factors that are considered are the changes in paper consumption, human transportation, goods transportation, storage space (in terms of materials flow and stock storage), and the introduction of ICT equipment. Then, changes in consumption of other resources, for example, compact disks (CDs), and the improvement of services using the Internet are forecast. In particular, the improvement in operating efficiency, which is the main goal when introducing an ICT solution, can be assessed in terms of environmental burden.

The first seven of the factors in this method are as follows: resource consumption, human transportation, goods transportation, office space, warehouse space, electrical power consumption of ICT and network equipment, and network data communication volume (Figure 1). Each of these factors is converted into an equivalent unit weight of CO₂ emission.

Then, the eighth factor — waste generation

— is converted into a total weight, and the total environmental burden is estimated. Table 1 lists definitions of the eight environmental burden factors, and Table 2 lists the estimated CO₂ emission unit weight for each factor.

The estimation of environmental burdens before and after the introduction of solutions is done by accumulating data about each investigated factor and then calculating the environmental burden for each factor in standard units.

The targets for each of the investigated factors are as follows:

- 1) Resource consumption: Increases and decreases in CD media, documentation, paper, and other factors accompanying the introduction of a solution.
- 2) Transportation of people and goods: Total amount of transportation of people and goods by cars, trains, planes, and other means.
- 3) Office space: Total amount of workspace area, documentation storage, and server equipment floor space.
- 4) Warehouse space: Area for shipping storage.
- 5) Power consumption of ICT and network equipment: Electricity consumption of the equipment.
- 6) Network data communication volume: Data volume transmitted over a network.

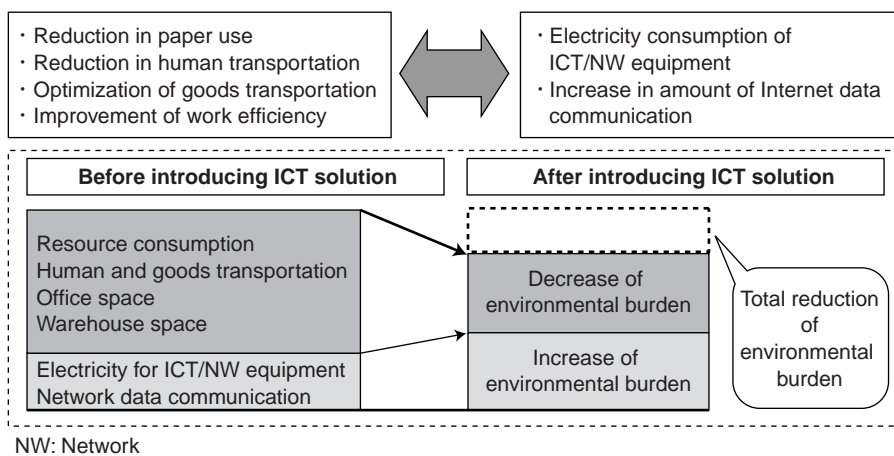


Figure 1
Environmental effects of introducing ICT.

Table 1
Eight environmental burden factors of ICT solutions.

(1) Resource consumption	CO ₂ emissions of product manufacturing stage
(2) Human transportation	CO ₂ emissions of transportation (cars, trains, planes, etc)
(3) Goods transportation	CO ₂ emissions of transportation (trucks, trains, planes, etc)
(4) Office space	CO ₂ emissions from energy consumption of air conditioning and other electrical devices, and CO ₂ from gas and gasoline used in offices as a power source
(5) Warehouse space	CO ₂ emissions from energy consumption of air conditioning and other electrical devices
(6) Electricity for ICT/NW equipment	CO ₂ emissions of ICT/NW equipment electricity consumption
(7) Network data communication	CO ₂ emissions relating to data communication
(8) Waste generation	Waste generation during manufacturing and final disposal

Table 2
Methods of calculating CO₂ emissions for factors listed in Table 1.

(1) Resource consumption	Paper use (A4 sheets/year) × paper weight (kg/sheet) × paper unit (kg-CO ₂ /kg)
(2) Human transportation	Car transportation (person-km/year) × car unit (kg-CO ₂ /person-km)
(3) Goods transportation	Truck transportation (t-km/year) × truck unit (kg-CO ₂ /t-km)
(4) Office space	Person-hours (persons) × office space (m ² /person) × office space unit (kg-CO ₂ /m ² -year)
(5) Warehouse space	Warehouse space (m ²) × warehouse unit (kg-CO ₂ /m ² -year)
(6) Electricity for ICT/NW equipment	Electricity (kW) × operation time (hour/year) × electricity unit (kg-CO ₂ /kWh)
(7) Network data communication	Data communication (Mbyte/year) × data communication unit (kg-CO ₂ /Mbyte)

In particular, as for office space, because operating efficiency can be improved by introducing solutions, it is thought that person-hours will fall and the occupied floor-space for related services (office space) will be reduced.

The environmental burden is estimated from the following two values:

Environmental burden due to energy consumed by an office building per year:

$$87.7 \text{ kg-CO}_2/\text{m}^2 \cdot \text{year}^7) \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

$$\text{Workspace per person: } 13.1 \text{ m}^2/\text{person}^8) \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

Accordingly, the CO₂ emission unit weight per person for an office building is calculated on the basis of (1) × (2) as 1149 kg-CO₂/person · year.

3. Case studies

We now describe two examples of environmentally-conscious solutions: one for a materials-procurement service and another for an

electronic administration service. By digitizing, standardizing, and commoditizing information, both of these solutions realize quick and efficient business transactions within company departments and between different companies.

It is anticipated that the introduction of these solutions will have the following effects:

- 1) Communication and information sharing will become instantaneous, so environmental burdens due to resource consumption and transportation will be reduced.
- 2) Communication and information sharing will improve, so environmental burdens due to person-hours will be reduced.

Example 1: Materials-procurement service

The materials-procurement service uses an application service provider (ASP) to support transactions in product parts, from the approval, ordering, and receiving stages, between supplier and buyer companies (Figure 2).

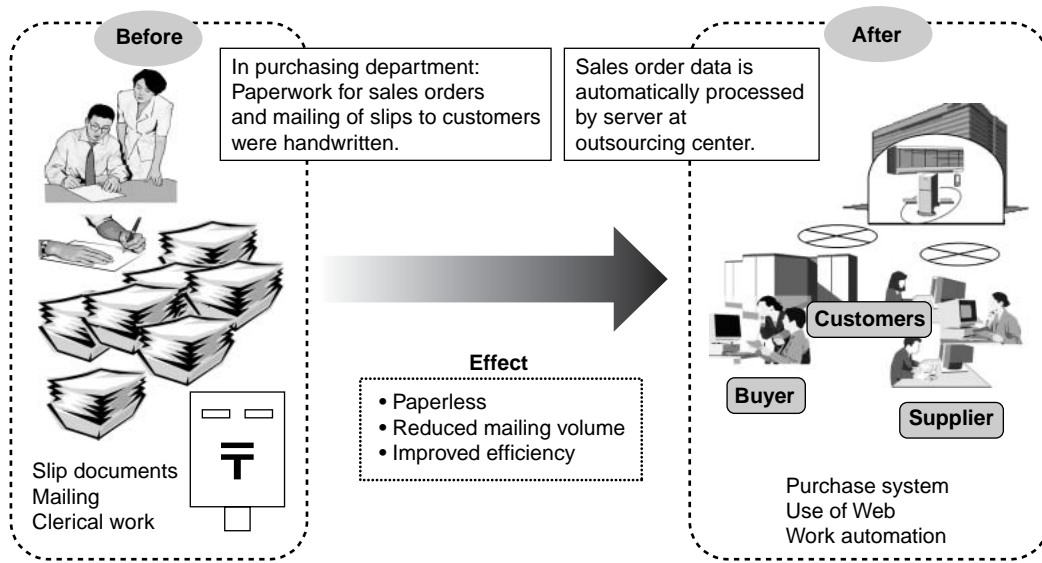


Figure 2 Before and after introducing materials procurement service.

The results of introducing this service are shown in **Figure 3**. As the figure shows, introducing the service decreased the CO₂ emission volume by 97%. In particular, the main factor contributing to the overall reduction is a 52% reduction in the amount of human transportation. Also, the increase in CO₂ emission volume based on the electricity consumption and network data communication volume accompanying the introduction is insignificant.

Example 2: Electronic administration service

The electronic administration service enables electronic approval of forms and documents used by local governments for accounting, salaries, general affairs, and other purposes (**Figure 4**).

The results of introducing this service are shown in **Figure 5**. As the figure shows, the service reduced the CO₂ emission volume by 44%. Particularly, the main factor contributing to the overall reduction is a 39% reduction in the office space used for handwritten approval. Also, as in Example 1 above, the increase in CO₂ emission volume based on the electricity consumption and network data communication volume accompanying the introduction is insignificant.

4. Trend analysis

Figure 6 shows a bar chart of the increases and decreases in CO₂ emissions due to the introduction of various ICT solutions.

The 23 solutions in the figure include the two examples described above. As can be seen, in most cases (14 solutions), the biggest reductions in CO₂ emissions are due to reductions in office space. The next CO₂-reducing factors, in decreasing importance, were transportation of people and goods (four solutions), electricity for ICT equipment (two solutions), resource consumption (two solutions), and warehouse space (one solution).

Although person-hours, documentation space, and ICT space are all factors reflected in office space, among them, the decrease in person-hours makes the biggest contribution to reducing CO₂ emissions. Therefore, when customers introduce a solution, we advise them to focus on promoting efficiency, which in turn will have the effect of reducing the environmental burden.

Although the electricity consumption of ICT equipment increases the environmental burden in many cases, when clients' legacy systems (e.g., mainframes) are replaced with new client/server systems and Web systems, power savings

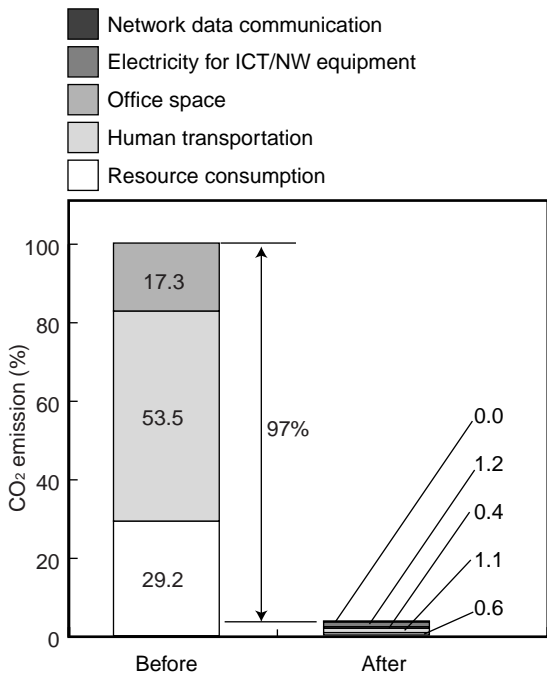


Figure 3 Environmental burdens before and after introducing materials procurement service.

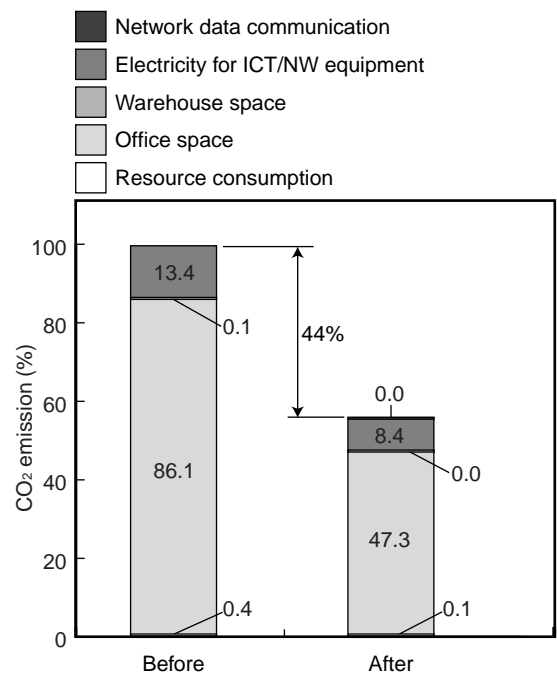


Figure 5 Environmental burdens before and after introducing electronic administration service.

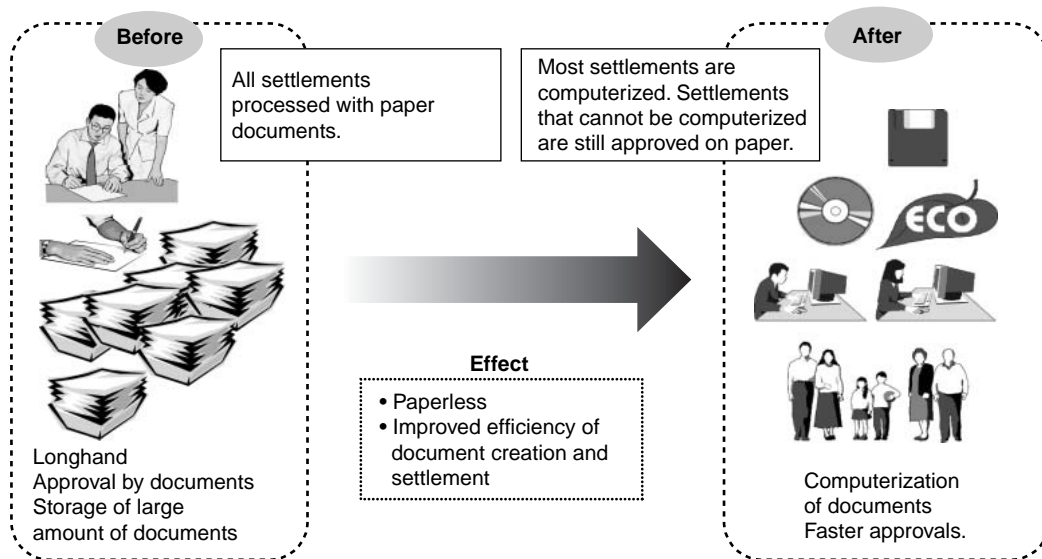
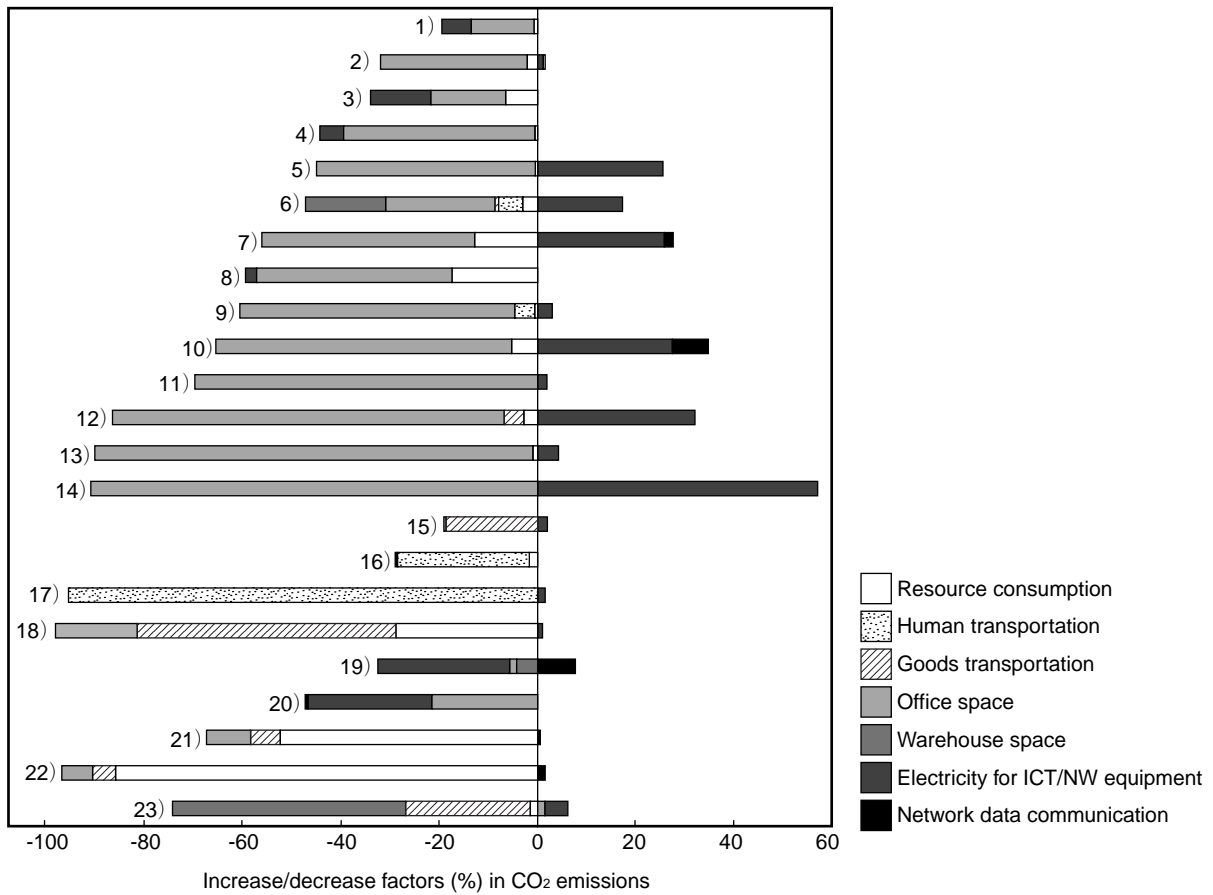


Figure 4 Before and after introducing electronic administration service.



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) Install service | 13) Environmental product information service |
| 2) Consulting service | 14) Environmental database service |
| 3) Personnel administration and payroll service | 15) Driving information service |
| 4) Electronic administration service | 16) Virtual product simulator service |
| 5) Financial data warehouse service | 17) e-learning service |
| 6) Management service of automatic teller machines | 18) Materials procurement service |
| 7) Electronic administration of application and approval service | 19) Dam management service |
| 8) Computerization service of office work for a financial organization | 20) Facilities management service |
| 9) Electronic data capture solution | 21) Document computerization solution |
| 10) Electronic medical data solution | 22) PC lifecycle management service |
| 11) Application management outsourcing service | 23) Electronic document management solution |
| 12) Computerization service of office work for a university | |

Figure 6
Analysis of CO₂ emissions for ICT solutions.

related to hardware will be gained, and these savings will be the main factor in reducing the environmental burden.

Moreover, other than solutions such as the computerization of manuals, very little of the CO₂ emission reductions achieved by these solutions is due to reductions in resource consumption.

5. Conclusion

We have devised a method for examining how ICT solutions reduce environmental burdens based on eight factors and evaluating how they improve business operations. We used this method to evaluate how introducing various Fujitsu ICT solutions have affected environmental burdens. We found that, of the eight factors, the biggest reductions in environmental burden in most cases were achieved through reductions in office space, which reduced working person-hours and therefore reduced energy consumption.

In the future, to improve reliability when evaluating environmental burden changes due to an ICT solution, it will be necessary to promote the use of standard units for indicating environmental burdens. Furthermore, by evaluating the

ICT introductions mentioned above, we will reduce the environmental burdens of our products and services and link them together to reduce the overall environmental burden of human activity.

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