

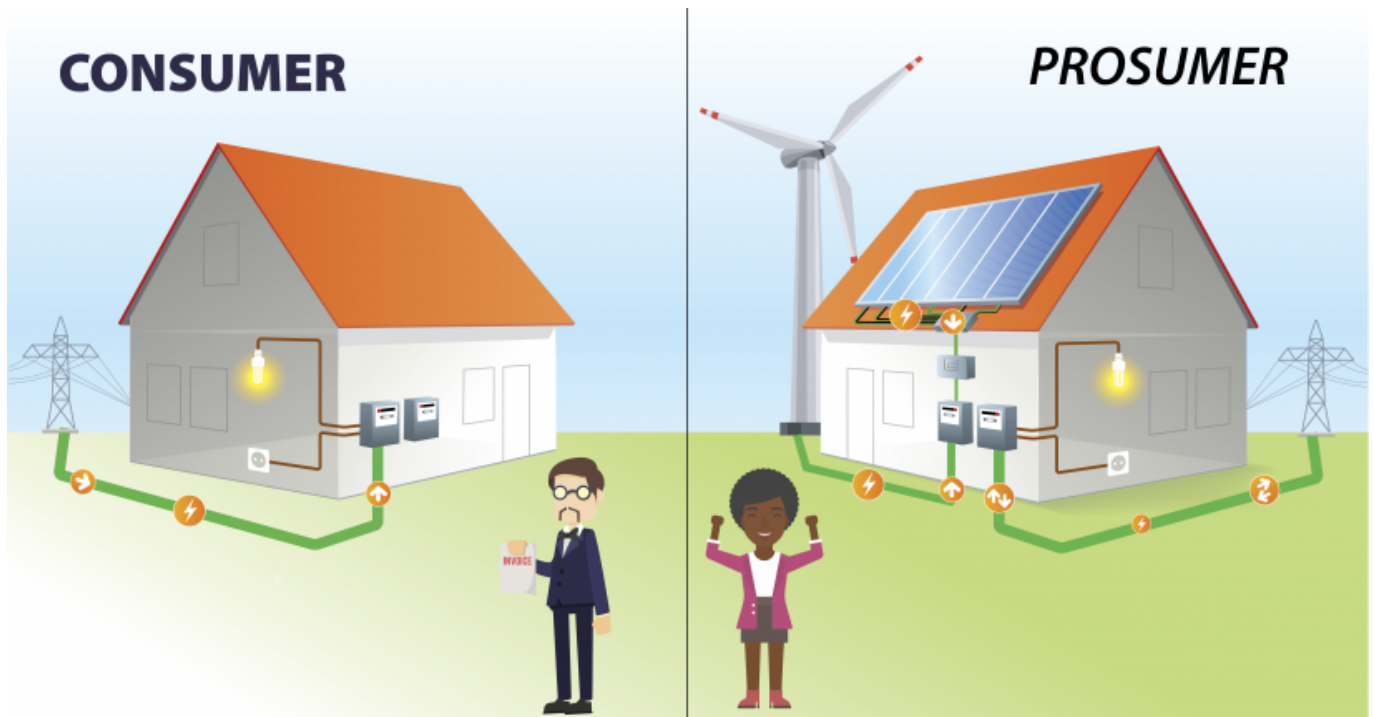


Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

Consumer vs Prosumer: What's the Difference?

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Graphic by Sarah Harman

Most of us have been consuming electricity from the grid the same way for more than a century now.

But that's starting to change.

A new buzzword is out on the streets signaling a growing shift in how we power our homes and communities – “prosumers.”

Simply put, a prosumer is someone who both produces and consumes energy – a shift made possible, in part, due to the rise of new connected technologies and the steady increase of more renewable power like solar and wind onto our electric grid.

Think of it like a Facebook feed or YouTube page. Most users don't just read or watch content – they also create their own and actively add to the conversation on social media.

Who is a Prosumer?

Prosumers are growing in the energy space as more Americans generate their own power from distributed energy resources. This is most often accomplished through rooftop solar panels and electric vehicles. Gone are the days when electricity consumption was a one-way street. Today's electric grid is blurring the lines between power generation and consumption.

The rise of prosumers highlights one of the most exciting trends in renewable energy. These emerging technologies can help preserve the natural

environment, drive economic development, and provide Americans more energy choices – spurring even greater competition and innovation in the energy sector.

The U.S. Department of Energy's [Grid Modernization Initiative](#) (GMI) is working with private and public partners to enable this rise of prosumers through the creation of a smart electric grid. GMI supports critical research and development in advanced storage systems, clean energy integration, and a number of other key grid modernization areas to ensure all prosumers have additional options and flexibility with their electricity.

