

German Federal Government warns against WLAN-use (*Wlan=WiFi*) Industry criticise the move.

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The German Federal Government [Bundesregierung] recommends that the use of WLAN in the workplace or at home should be avoided, if possible. In order to reduce personal radiation exposure, it is better to remain with conventional cable-connected networks. "All the evidence indicates that radiation levels that are below the permitted limit are not harmful to health. Nevertheless, mechanisms of action could exist", explained Florian Emrich from the Federal Office for Radiation Protection (Bundesamt für Strahlenschutz) to presettext.



The noxious effects of the WLAN were not proven up to now (photo : Pixelio)

The basis for the judgement of possible health damage through wireless networks is the Specific Absorption Rate (SAR). It defines the quantity of radiation power that is absorbed by the human body. The limit is 0.08 Watt per kilogram (W/kg) for the whole body and 2.00 W/kg for parts of the body. With values of 0.1 W/kg at a minimum distance from individual parts of the body WLAN lies far below the limit. "One should not forget that it concerns a relatively new technology, that must be further researched ", declares Emrich sceptically.

Whilst the radiation from public networks was low, telecommunications networks in the occupational and private environment could lead to stress, if a minimum distance from the transmitters [Funkstationen] is not maintained, stated the Government. In Germany, there are about 9,000 public WLAN-Hot-Spots. However, the radiation exposure always remains below the EU-Limit of 10 Watts per square metre.

"The fact is that the radiation exposure from mobile telecommunications is ten- to fifty fold higher ", criticised Carsten Kunert, speaker from the network manufacturer Netgear, in the discussion with presettext. It was unclear to him why they had just zeroed-in on the telecommunications network. "Possibly, lobbyists of the UMTS-branches are behind this recommendation ", suspects Kunert. "Or, it is due a basic tendency to condemn everything that one does not know." The user should make the decision on whether to use cable or wireless networks based on technical criteria – if both alternatives are given users would anyway tend to use to the quicker wired solution, concludes Kunert.