The Impact of Light Pollution

Brief History of Light Bulb Usage

Light Science 101

Health Concerns – Birds, Bees & Peeps

Safety – Home Security and Driving

Economic Incentives
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Light pollution is defined as the illumination of the night sky caused by artificial light. A problem born with the invention of the light bulb only 125 years ago. 80% of Americans cannot see the Milky Way from their backyards.
Common Light Bulbs

Incandescent  Low P Sodium  High P Sodium

We have become very energy efficient at illuminating the night!!

Incandescent
- 1879

Halogen
- 1882
- 1959
Use 30% less energy than incandescent
Last 3X as long

Low P Sodium
- 1920

CFL
- 1973
Use 75% less energy than incandescent
Can last up to 10 years

High P Sodium
- 1932

LED
- 1994
Use 85% less energy than incandescent
Can last up to 25 years
Light pollution & human health

Study: Sensitivity of the human circadian system to short-wavelength light.
Source: Journal of Biological Rhythms (2008)

Conclusion: Exposure to light at night resulted in a reduction in melatonin levels which negatively impacted the natural wake-sleep cycle.

Study: The relationship between obesity and exposure to light at night.
Source: Journal of Epidemiology (2014)

Conclusion: Odds of obesity increased with increasing exposure to light at night.
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Electro-magnetic spectrum and light

Increasing energy

Wavelength (meters)

10^{-14} 10^{-12} 10^{-10} 10^{-8} 10^{-6} 10^{-4} 10^{-2} 1 10^2 10^4

Gamma rays  X-rays  Ultraviolet rays  Infrared rays  Radar  FM  TV  Short-wave  AM

Visible light

Blue Light

Wavelength (nanometers)

400 500 600 700
Bulb Use History - % Blue Light

**Incandescent**
- 60 Watt 2800k
- 11%

**Low P Sodium**
- 1960k
- 0%

**High P Sodium**
- 2800k
- 9%

**Halogen**
- 2935k
- 13%

**CFL**
- 60 Watt 2800 K
- 20%

**LED**
- 60 Watt 2700 K
- 15-21%

Use 30% less energy than incandescent
Last 3X as long

Use 75% less energy than incandescent
Can last up to 10 years

Use 85% less energy than incandescent
Can last up to 25 years
HPS Vs. LED

[Images of street lights, one HPS (High Pressure Sodium) and one LED (Light Emitting Diode)]

Spectrometer images taken by INSI

https://www.slideshare.net/pharoxindia/why-led-street-lights-are-better-than-the-conventional-lighting
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Blue light is at the higher energy portion of the visible spectrum. It scatters easily when it strikes particles like dust and water vapor.

It enters our fluid filled eyes and reflects off the interior walls of the eye and impacts our ability to see clearly.

It penetrates the macular pigment and harms the retina.

Fully shielded fixtures do not protect us from the scattering of these wavelengths.
A 3000K LED emits a lot of blue light. This filter eliminates almost all of the harmful blue light (3000K LED + Amber Filter).
Light pollution & human health

2016 AMA study recommends minimizing blue light exposure to reduce the risk of chronic disease.

Harvard Medical Study – Blue light contributes to macular degeneration, glaucoma and retinal degenerative diseases.

American Macular Degeneration Foundation – Blue light accelerates age-related macular degeneration.
HPS Vs. LED

http://www.lamptech.co.uk/Documents/S0%20Spectral.htm

https://www.slideshare.net/pharoxindia/why-led-street-lights-are-better-than-the-conventional-lighting
Change Your Device Preferences

Spectra for the Night Shift Off, Middle, and Maximum Settings

iPhone X Light Spectrum

![Graph showing iPhone X light spectrum with settings for Night Shift Off, Middle, and Maximum. The graph compares the absorbance against wavelength for blue, green, and red light.](http://www.displaymate.com/Spectra_41a.html)

Light pollution & human health

Scientists are just beginning to understand the negative impacts on health.

The circadian clock affects important physiologic processes.

Disruption of these processes are associated with:

- Sleep Disorders
- Psychiatric Disorders
- Cardiovascular Diseases
- Immunological Disorders
- Metabolic Disorders
- Obesity
- Cancer Progression
- Vision Disease Progression

Dr. Maya Angelou

"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."
Millions of birds die each year from collisions with brightly lit buildings and towers.

The light confuses them and interferes with their migration.

In light polluted areas, birds continuously chirp throughout the night. This disrupts their sleep patterns, preventing them from resting.
Fireflies lose their ability to seek and find mates using their own much dimmer bio-luminescence.

Moths and other insects are relied upon to pollinate crops.

Bright lights attract insects away from the crops which make them easy prey for bats.

Crops yields are reduced.
Amber shielded fixtures do not attract insects!!

After 1 year

Photo Courtesy of Wilson Jimenez
Light Pollution Impact - Wildlife

Too much artificial light at night affects the wildlife that share our neighborhoods with us.

Light pollution impacts:

Migration Patterns
Sleep Quality
Foraging
Reproduction
Increased Exposure to Predators
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What about Home Security??

Is there clear scientific evidence that increased outdoor lighting deters crime?

Does it just make us feel safer?
Brighter Does Not Mean Safer

The Chicago Alley Lighting Project: Final Evaluation Report

April 2000

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Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority

George H. Ryan, Governor
Peter B. Bensinger, Chairman
Candice M. Kane, Executive Director

Correlation between brightly lit alleyways and increased crime.

Authorities can safely reduce street lighting without impacting safety and crime adversely. "We have little confidence that improved/brighter lighting prevents crime."
Glare creates deep shadows. It shines into your eyes, constricting your pupils. This diminishes your eyes' ability to adapt to low-light conditions.

Retrofit Idea - St. George, UT
Do you want to see better while you're driving?

Our desire to become a Dark Sky not a Dark Ground Community

Before

After
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Energy Savings

Saving energy makes economic sense.

The International Dark-Sky Association in Tucson, Arizona, estimates that one-third of all lighting in the U.S. is wasted.

Annual cost of about U.S. $3.3 billion equating to 55 million barrels of oil or 49 million tons of coal.

Saving energy also keeps our air cleaner as 70% of our electricity in Utah is generated from coal.
Dark Skies Enhance our Property Values

People want to escape what is called “Brightness Blight”

Some areas of the western US use dark skies as a key selling point.

Incorporating a dark sky ordinance into their designs has contributed to the developments overall attractiveness.

Sedona, AZ listing – “Private sunbathing during day – incredible red rock views and Dark Sky telescope observations at night!”
Dark Skies Enhance our Property Values

In Colorado, a development called Summit Sky Ranch is building dark-sky preservation standards into the community’s overall design, including streetlights and an observatory. Home prices start around $950,000 compared to Denver’s median home price of $410,000.
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https://summitskyranch.com/amenities/
The collaborative efforts of the City, INSI volunteers, citizens and businesses is not just about preserving the night sky, it’s also about preserving and protecting our health and safety.
FINI

https://ivinsnightsky.org