

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the article "Wi-Fi controversy reignited in Thorold"

Is it really necessary to have wifi transmitters on poles, blanketing whole neighbourhoods with radiation? Residents already have cable and phone lines into their homes to connect to the internet. If they choose to have wireless technology in their homes, then that is their choice. But what about residents who do not want to be irradiated by this technology? They don't have a choice. The technology is being imposed on them against their wishes. These wifi units are transmitting into the homes of those who don't subscribe to the service. They are emitting radiation and we all know the health harm radiation can cause.

There are already so many sources of radiation in our environment; why add another source, especially when there are safer alternatives?

As for Councillor Handley's comment about scare tactics.... In Sept. 2007, the German government issued a warning to its citizens, "The Environment Ministry recommended that people should keep their exposure to radiation from Wi-Fi "as low as possible" by choosing "conventional wired connections". It added that it is "actively informing people about possibilities for reducing personal exposure".

(<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/green-living/germany-warns-citizens-to-avoid-using-wifi-401845.html>)

Are they using scare tactics? They are obviously more concerned about their citizens' health than the money this technology would generate. They are exercising the *Precautionary Principal* that states, ".... Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation." (*Article 15 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*.

<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=78&ArticleID=1163>)

This is a United Nations Declaration that all UN members agreed to and signed.

One councillor also mentions that studies can be found saying the technology isn't dangerous. True.... but who paid for those studies? The most reliable studies are those that are not paid for by the industry that is churning out this technology. I agree, "let's compare apples to apples".

This councillor also says that he asked the wifi company if there were ill-health effects from this technology. They told him there weren't. De ja vu; remember what the cigarette and asbestos industry told us? How many years was it before government listened to the scientific studies saying these products are harmful to health? And how many people became ill or died in the mean time? Even with the knowledge that cigarettes cause illness and death, the government still allows their production, sale, and use. Why? Because there is a lot of money to lose if they are banned, by the government and the industry. Let's weigh it out: dollars vs. healthy citizens...and the winner is... dollars....again.

The Radiation Protection Bureau of Health Canada, has a series of safety codes that specify the requirements for the safe use of radiation emitting devices. *Limits of Human Exposure to Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields in the Frequency Range from 3 KHZ to 300 GHZ - Safety Code 6* (http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semr/pubs/radiation/99ehd-dhm237/index_e.html)

One problem with this safety code is that it only protects us from the thermal (cooking) effect of microwaves. It does not protect us from the biological effects of microwaves and as stated by the BioInitiative Working Group (An international working group of scientists, researchers and public health policy professionals), "the existing standards for public safety are inadequate to protect public health".

Another problem with this safety code is that it was last revised in 1999. In the eight years since then, wireless technology has become much more powerful and its use is much more wide spread. This code is years overdue for another revision.

In 2007 The BioInitiative Working Group (An international working group of scientists, researchers and public health policy professionals), published a report that documents serious scientific concerns about

current limits regulating how much EMF is allowable from power lines, cell phones, and many other sources of EMF exposure in daily life. (<http://www.bioinitiative.org/report/index.htm>)

The 14 members of this group reviewed 2000 scientific studies before coming to this conclusion. To use the councillors own words, that is "comparing apples to apples". This study was not funded by industry and is therefore very reliable. In fact it was this report that spurred the German Government to warn its citizens about the technology.

In conclusion, there is evidence that this technology causes health harm and the safety standards set by the Government of Canada and other governments around the world, are inadequate to protect us from it. We can argue it until we are blue in the face but in the mean time, what of the health of those people who are unwillingly exposed to this radiation? Shouldn't the precautionary principle be adopted to protect the health of Canadians?

It's time to 'butt out' to reduce the exposure of non-users, to second hand radiation.

Sue Parsons