

What's in my Stuff project

In today's developed societies we all own an unprecedented amount of "stuff" and nothing is more representative of this than our attitudes to the mobile phone. The increasing demand for smartphones in developed societies and the huge market for mobile phones in the developing countries have led us to ask the following questions:

- Do you know what's in the stuff you use every day?
- Do you know where the chemical elements in your things come from, how they're extracted and how much is left on our planet?
- How often do you discard something rare and precious without even realising it?

What's In My Stuff? is an interdisciplinary research project which brings together scientists and artists in order to explore the public's awareness of the chemical elements used in the everyday objects we all own and use. It explores issues of sustainability, recycling and growing concerns about the scarcity and ethical sourcing of the minerals and materials that we take for granted or never knew existed but which are vital for the technology we use every day.

What values do we place on the technological devices we use every day and what factors influence the decisions we make when we discard them?

What's In My Stuff? Is a Sheffield Hallam University, Engineering for Life research network project, sponsored by the EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Science Research Council) and Harsco Metals. It is a collaborative project between Dr Hywel Jones and Dr Karen Vernon-Parry from the Material and Engineering Research institute (MERI) and Maria Hanson, Reader in Metalwork and Jewellery in the Art and Design Research Centre (ARDC).

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