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## Abstract

Considerable research has been made on the role of users in the shaping of technologies, not only at the conception and design process but also during their adoption and appropriation. This research looks into the various processes of socially constructing and configuring the role of users during the implementation and installation of solar photovoltaic systems in the north of England. Nowadays, a lot of debate is taking place at various decision making levels on the need, feasibility and use of renewable energy sources to combat climate change. Moreover, the UK is trying to meet the Kyoto Protocol levels of carbon emissions, as well as adapting to anticipated shortages of a finite source such as fuel, in the future.

The paper discusses initial results from an empirical investigation regarding the installation of photovoltaic panels on social housing in the north of England. The research looks into a case study involving the installation of 25 photovoltaic arrays on a block of 25 flats as part of the Photovoltaic Domestic Field Trial scheme run by the Department of Trade and Industry. Preliminary analysis of the results reveals various and often conflicting social constructions or “visions” of what the users are. These social constructions consequently influence the way the users are configured in relation to the photovoltaic system. The study finds that the way the users are configured within this socio-technical system can affect the shaping of how photovoltaics are installed or deployed, both technically and socially. It sheds light on possible social learning processes occurring during the field trial and the production of knowledge and expertise on this particular technology.