METRE GROUP
SMARTER DESIGNS

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As a leading developer for the automatic meter reading (AMR) technologies, Metre Group believes that regulations should allow deployment of both uni-directional and bi-directional systems.

Information flowing into storage network (reading) provides values on energy measurements, peak demand values, timestamp values and various events related to meter operation and reliability. After the collection, data can be examined in the storage centre and various statistics can be obtained.

Information flowing into the smart meter (writing) is mostly for dynamic configuration and programming purposes. That includes changes to energy pricing (tariffs), interrupting/limiting the power delivery, date and time synchronization and various warnings coming from the network management centre.

One should consider the fact that the amount and the content of data traffic will change according to the requirements of local distribution companies (LDC) and the neighborhood they operate in. Some vendors provide metering systems that could be highly sophisticated and intelligent, supported with wired and wireless networks, and some of the systems are simple and can work with manual operations.

For example a uni-directional handheld unit that can read data over the infrared port of the smart meter is simple, flexible and sufficient for many regions. If the meter reading operations are infrequent, let's say on a monthly basis, they can be easily handled by service personnel.

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The same system can be fully automated using traditional AMR systems. When a transmitter/transceiver is attached to the meter, the operation can be automated via a wireless system. Read/write operations can be done as many times as desired. (Let's say using a drive-by vehicle for weekly operations, or using on-line base stations for real time operations). Open data protocol would help vendors specializing only in meter design and production to participate in the implementation.

We believe the standards should be flexible, and allow the applications of wide range of systems from simple uni-directional to highly sophisticated bi-directional ones.

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