

The Neglected Practice

- Uncertainties encountered by occupants in a new energy efficient building

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Abstract

Technical and performance related uncertainties that come with an increased number of components and system complexity are often thoroughly examined and tested in demonstration buildings. On the contrary, and despite the energy research literature stressing the importance to understand the requirements and context of the users, the uncertainties that occupants encounter while adapting to new energy efficient buildings are seldom examined and identified in depth.

This paper will highlight the usefulness of seeing the technologies for buildings from the users' point of view. From a social practice perspective and the concept of domestication the paper examines various types of uncertainties encountered by occupants when managing technologies for buildings, such as bedrock heat pump, photovoltaic panels and LED-lighting, in a new energy efficient house.

The result demonstrates that it is demanding and tiresome to tackle uncertainties and learn how to handle technologies for building, as well as to contact professionals for support. It might in fact be more convenient to "leave it as it is", with the consequences that no one is managing the technologies. Instead of assuming that carrying out this practice is straightforward, it would be better to work on an approach where this is not the case. In fact, the later approach creates much better conditions for extended learning and product development than the former.