

How Elon Musk is Changing the World with Solar Energy

This visionary takes renewable energy to the people

Climate change, dwindling fossil fuel reserves and soaring hydro bills are all good reasons to find renewable energy sources that are clean and affordable. Visionary entrepreneur, Elon Musk, understands the enormous potential for solar energy.

In a recent interview, Musk shows just how much potential solar has: "The important thing to appreciate is if let's say the only thing we had was solar energy, that that was the only power source, if you just took a small section of Spain, you could power all of Europe. It's a very small amount of area that's actually needed to generate the electricity we need to power civilization. Or in the case of the US, a little corner of Nevada or Utah, power the entire United States."

That's because enough solar energy reaches the earth's surface in just one hour to power the whole planet for an entire year. Musk has made it his mission in life to make solar energy efficient and accessible to all. There are several ways in which he is making solar viable for the masses.

Solar Roof Tiles

Solar roof tiles will be available in four options, two of which are [on order now](#) and two that will be released in early 2018. The tiles are made from glass from the automotive industry, so they are exceptionally strong as can be seen in this demonstration video:

<https://thumbs.gfycat.com/BelovedNippyLark-mobile.mp4>

The company says its solar roofs will come in at a "lower cost than a traditional roof when combined with projected utility bill savings." The solar roof tiles will replace conventional roof tiles and will generate energy for use in the home.

PowerWall

Whether you have solar roof shingles or a traditional solar system, you will need a place to store your energy during the day if you don't want to rely on the grid at night or in inclement weather. Tesla's answer is the super sleek [PowerWall system](#).

The PowerWall is a battery storage system that's easy to install and requires no maintenance. The PowerWall can be mounted on a floor or wall either indoors or out. Each 14 kWh Powerwall battery will set you back around \$10,000 with installation and software.

Powering Kauai

[Solar City](#), the company founded by Elon Musk and his two cousins, has built a solar farm that powers the entire Hawaiian island of Kauai. Here 54,978 solar panels produce 13 megawatts of energy. The sun doesn't always shine, so excess energy is stored in a 52 megawatt-hour battery installation. SolarCity is owned by Tesla and is the largest solar installation company in the US.

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