

LUMENS – the new Watts?

The other night one of the sixty watt light bulbs in one of my living room table lamps died. Replacing it seemed like one of the simplest DIY jobs around the house. However, I didn't have a replacement at home and it seems deciding to get a replacement light bulb these days can be a stressful thing.

In the good old days, we all used the same kind of bulbs and fittings. We didn't necessarily know it at the time, but we all used not just "bulbs" because these are technically known as "incandescent bulbs" as their light comes from a little glowing wire filament inside. Also, the usual base of these incandescent bulbs is technically know as a "bayonet connection" or "BC" or just "B" for short.

Fine, straightforward, got all that. So, off I go to nearest lighting retailer to find a replacement for our sixty watt (60W) light bulb, sorry, incandescent bulb. Standing in front of the lighting shelves at a large DIY store, for example, I find I am faced with an astonishingly bewildering choice and variety of bulbs and fittings. It seems I really needed to have a PhD in decision logic before coming here – I am bamboozled by all the alternatives...halogen, warm white, LED, SES, fluorescent, CFL, energy saving.. the options seem endless.

OK, so some form of energy saving bulb would seem better as this could save me some money – useful. But it seems that a 60W energy saving bulb can be much brighter than a 60W incandescent bulb, so how can I compare and find the best equivalent? Well, it seems that LUMENS are the answer. LUMENS is how bright something is whereas watts is really just how much energy something uses.

So we need to concentrate on LUMENS these days. The pictures below say it all – now I can easily find an equivalent energy saving bulb for any of the common incandescent bulbs in my house by using LUMENS. (Oh, and by the way, you should also make sure your replacement bulb has a colour temperature of 2700K on the side of the box!).

Question – how many Spaniards does it take to change a light bulb? (answer = just Juan!)

See also:

<http://www.darkwightskies.com>

<http://www.which.co.uk/energy/energy-saving-products/reviews-ns/light-bulbs/light-bulb-faqs/>

Incandescent (Watts)	Lumens	LED or CFL (Watts)
25	250	4 to 9
40	450	9 to 13
60	800	13 to 15
75	1110	18 to 25
100	1600	23 to 30
125	2000	22 to 40
150	2600	40 to 45

