

# Stranger Things & U.S. Department of Energy

August 10, 2016

Science fiction thriller *Stranger Things* casts the government as an enemy, but the real U.S. Department of Energy shows how to use the story to their advantage.

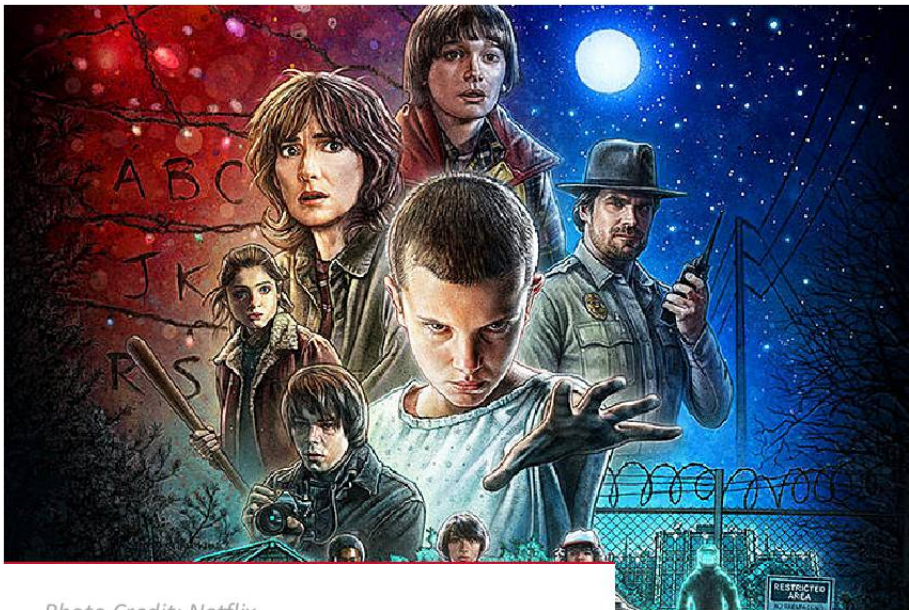


Photo Credit: Netflix

Who knew the federal government was so hip to pop culture? In this fantastic example from the U.S. Department of Energy, they used a storyline from Netflix's *Stranger Things* to act as the subject matter expert on the science and policy of energy and government agencies, all of which the show portrays as quite sinister. Instead of attacking

the story, they took the opportunity to explain some key differences between *Stranger Things* and... reality! They wrote a great blog (<http://energy.gov/articles/what-stranger-things-didn-t-get-quite-so-right-about-energy-department>) which outlined the real work going on at the DOE filled with links to amazing women scientists, breakthroughs at the real labs, and even how Christmas lights work. They shared that through their social media channels, then the post was gleefully picked up by publications and blogs like [Vulture](http://www.vulture.com/2016/08/department-of-energy-stranger-things-is-fiction.html) (<http://www.vulture.com/2016/08/department-of-energy-stranger-things-is-fiction.html>), [Gizmodo](http://io9.gizmodo.com/a-fact-check-of-the-department-of-energys-fact-check-of-1784992041) (<http://io9.gizmodo.com/a-fact-check-of-the-department-of-energys-fact-check-of-1784992041>), [Refinery29](http://www.refinery29.com/2016/08/119533/energy-department-stranger-things) (<http://www.refinery29.com/2016/08/119533/energy-department-stranger-things>), [Business Insider](http://www.businessinsider.com/stranger-things-show-hawkins-lab-doe-facts-2016-8) (<http://www.businessinsider.com/stranger-things-show-hawkins-lab-doe-facts-2016-8>), [Vanity Fair](http://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2016/08/stranger-things-department-of-energy-fact-check) (<http://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2016/08/stranger-things-department-of-energy-fact-check>), [Newsweek](http://www.newsweek.com/stranger-things-department-energy-isnt-so-bad-says-department-energy-488698) (<http://www.newsweek.com/stranger-things-department-energy-isnt-so-bad-says-department-energy-488698>), [Vice](http://motherboard.vice.com/read/the-actual-department-of-energy-spoils-stranger-things) (<http://motherboard.vice.com/read/the-actual-department-of-energy-spoils-stranger-things>), and countless science publications eager to share the “fact check” from the DOE.

**Remember, even if a storyline is imperfect** (<http://andaction.org/how-this-works/use-imperfect-storyline/>), **an organization can make the pop culture pivot to from story to facts. It works every time!**