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Distributed Energy Intelligence: Coordinating Prosumers, Storage Systems and Renewable Power Resources

Dr. Thomas Morstyn

Associate Professor, University of Oxford, UK

Abstract

The increasing deployment of rooftop photovoltaic generation, distributed wind systems, battery energy storage, electric vehicles and digitally controllable loads is changing the structure of electricity distribution networks. Consumers are progressively becoming prosumers who produce, store, consume and potentially trade electricity. These resources can improve renewable-energy integration, local resilience and demand flexibility, but their uncoordinated operation can also intensify feeder congestion, voltage variation, reverse power flow, renewable curtailment and synchronized demand peaks. Distributed energy intelligence provides a means of coordinating these heterogeneous resources through forecasting, optimization, automated control, transactive mechanisms and secure information exchange.

This study develops a conceptual architecture for coordinating prosumers, stationary batteries, electric vehicles and distributed renewable resources. The proposed architecture integrates local resource controllers, an aggregation platform, distribution-network intelligence, market coordination and a governance layer. A structured review of established research concerning virtual power plants, peer-to-peer energy trading, demand response, battery scheduling and transactive energy supports the framework. An author-generated simulation is then used to compare uncoordinated resource operation with a coordinated, network-aware scenario.

The simulated distribution feeder has an uncoordinated peak demand of 100 MW. Flexible prosumer demand reduces the peak by an illustrative 11 MW, coordinated battery dispatch contributes a further 15 MW reduction and intelligent electric-vehicle charging reduces the remaining peak by another 8 MW. The resulting coordinated peak is 66 MW, equivalent to a 34% reduction. The simulation also indicates lower renewable-energy curtailment, fewer voltage-limit violations, reduced operating cost and improved local renewable-energy utilization. These numerical results are explicitly illustrative and do not represent measurements from an operational electricity network.The findings suggest that distributed energy intelligence should not be understood as a single artificial-intelligence model or centralized optimization platform. It is a layered socio-technical capability that must reconcile physical network constraints, uncertain renewable generation, participant preferences, storage degradation, market incentives, privacy, cybersecurity and institutional accountability. Effective deployment requires hybrid control, calibrated forecasts, interoperable communication, equitable compensation and meaningful human oversight.

Keywords: distributed energy intelligence, prosumers, battery energy storage, renewable power, virtual power plant, transactive energy, demand response, electric vehicles, smart grid

1. Introduction

Electricity systems were traditionally organized around large generating stations, high-voltage transmission networks and relatively passive consumers. Electricity moved primarily from centralized power plants toward commercial, industrial and residential users. System operators maintained the balance between generation and consumption by modifying the output of dispatchable power stations. Distribution networks were generally designed to accommodate predictable, one-directional power flows.The rapid expansion of distributed energy resources is changing this structure. Rooftop solar photovoltaic systems, small wind generators, battery storage, electric vehicles, heat pumps, smart appliances and flexible commercial loads are being connected at the distribution level. Many consumers can now generate electricity, store surplus production and adjust their consumption according to prices or system requirements. These active participants are commonly described as prosumers.

Distributed resources offer considerable environmental and operational value. Local renewable generation can reduce dependence on fossil-fuel electricity and lower transmission requirements. Battery storage can absorb surplus solar or wind energy and release it during periods of high demand. Flexible loads can modify consumption without necessarily reducing the quality of the energy service received. Electric vehicles can shift charging to periods of lower demand or stronger renewable production.These technologies nevertheless introduce new operational complexity. Renewable generation varies with weather conditions and cannot always be aligned with local demand. A distribution feeder with high rooftop-solar penetration may experience reverse power flow and voltage rise during the afternoon, followed by a sharp evening demand increase when solar output declines. An electric-vehicle charging cluster can overload a local transformer if many vehicles begin charging at the same time.

Uncoordinated battery behaviour can produce a similar problem. Individual batteries may be programmed to charge when electricity prices fall and discharge when prices rise. If thousands of batteries respond identically to the same tariff, their synchronized action may create a new system peak. An energy resource can therefore be intelligent from the perspective of its owner while remaining harmful from the perspective of the wider network.Digitalization provides a potential mechanism for managing this complexity. Smart meters, sensors, connected inverters and automated controllers generate detailed information regarding consumption, production, storage condition and network performance. Forecasting models can estimate renewable output and demand. Optimization systems can determine when flexible resources should consume, store or export electricity. The International Energy Agency has emphasized that digital technologies can support increasingly interconnected and responsive energy systems when their implementation is accompanied by appropriate security and governance.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Prosumers, Flexible Demand and Local Energy Exchange

The term prosumer combines the roles of producer and consumer. In electricity systems, a prosumer may generate electricity through rooftop photovoltaic panels, consume part of that generation, store a surplus and export the remainder. Smart meters and digital platforms allow prosumers to respond to tariffs, participate in demand-response programmes or offer flexibility through aggregators.

Parag and Sovacool (2016) explained that prosumer-oriented electricity markets could transform conventional relationships between utilities and consumers. Rather than remaining passive recipients of energy, households and businesses can make decisions concerning generation, storage and exchange. This transition has implications for market design, regulation and network operation because independently owned resources can influence system-level outcomes.

Prosumer participation can create benefits at several levels. Self-consumption can reduce a household's exposure to retail electricity prices. Community energy sharing can improve the local use of renewable generation. Aggregated flexibility can help reduce system peaks or provide reserve services. However, the value of a prosumer action depends on its timing and network location. Electricity exported during a period of local congestion may have less system value than the same quantity supplied during a constrained evening period.

2.2 Energy Storage and Renewable Resource Coordination

Energy storage plays a central role in distributed renewable-energy integration. Solar and wind resources produce electricity according to environmental conditions rather than consumer demand. Battery systems can absorb surplus generation and discharge during periods of high demand, low renewable output or network congestion.

The operational value of a battery depends on how its schedule is calculated. A battery may be used for self-consumption, energy-price arbitrage, peak reduction, backup supply, voltage support, frequency regulation or reserve provision. These services may overlap or compete. A battery maintaining a high state of charge for emergency backup has less capacity available for energy-market participation.

Battery coordination must include degradation. Cycling gradually reduces usable capacity, and degradation is influenced by depth of discharge, charge rate, temperature and battery chemistry. An optimization model that ignores degradation may schedule excessive cycling and exaggerate financial benefit. A defensible model therefore includes an estimated degradation cost alongside electricity prices and system-service revenues.

2.3 Virtual Power Plants and Transactive Coordination

A virtual power plant aggregates distributed generation, storage and flexible demand so that these resources can be coordinated or represented as a combined portfolio. Pudjianto et al. (2007) described the virtual power plant as an interface for integrating distributed resources into electricity-system operation and markets.

A virtual power plant does not require its resources to be located at a single physical site. Aggregation is achieved through communication and control. A portfolio may include residential batteries, commercial cooling systems, industrial loads, electric vehicles and small renewable generators distributed across several areas.

Virtual power plants can provide energy, capacity, balancing and congestion-management services. Their value depends on accurate resource availability estimates and reliable control. An aggregator that overcommits flexibility may fail to deliver a contracted service. Conservative availability estimation and performance monitoring are therefore essential.

3. Objectives

The study treats distributed energy coordination as a socio-technical problem rather than a narrow optimization exercise. Its primary objective is to develop an interpretable architecture that coordinates heterogeneous resources while respecting physical network constraints and prosumer preferences.

A second objective is to demonstrate how distinct flexibility resources contribute to a common operational outcome. The simulation therefore separates the effects of flexible prosumer demand, battery dispatch and intelligent electric-vehicle charging rather than reporting only an aggregated performance value.

The specific objectives are:

- To examine the operational relationships among prosumers, renewable generation, stationary storage and electric-vehicle charging.
- To develop a layered framework connecting local controllers, aggregators, distribution-system operators and energy-market mechanisms.
- To identify the forecasting, optimization and communication functions required for distributed energy coordination.
- To compare uncoordinated resource operation with network-aware coordinated scheduling through an explicitly labelled simulation.
- To estimate the illustrative contribution of demand flexibility, battery dispatch and electric-vehicle charging to feeder peak reduction.
- To evaluate potential changes in operating cost, renewable-energy curtailment, voltage-limit violations and local renewable utilization.
- pathway that combines automation with meaningful participant control and human oversight.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design and Evidence-Review Process

The study adopts a conceptual-review and simulation-based research design. The conceptual component synthesizes established research concerning distributed energy resources, prosumer participation, virtual power plants, peer-to-peer electricity exchange, demand response, battery scheduling, smart charging and transactive energy. The simulation provides an analytical demonstration of how coordinated flexibility may influence selected feeder-level outcomes.

Literature searches were structured using combinations of the terms "distributed energy resources," "distributed energy intelligence," "prosumer coordination," "battery scheduling," "virtual power plant," "peer-to-peer energy trading," "transactive energy," "smart charging," "demand response" and "distributed optimization." Relevant sources were identified through major scholarly databases, publisher platforms, technical repositories and authoritative energy-sector publications.

4.2 Proposed Coordination Architecture

The proposed platform includes five functional layers. The physical-resource layer contains photovoltaic systems, distributed wind resources, batteries, electric vehicles, flexible appliances and controllable commercial loads. The local-intelligence layer observes asset condition and converts participant preferences into operating constraints.

The aggregation layer combines flexibility envelopes from multiple participants. An envelope specifies how much a resource can adjust consumption or generation, when that adjustment is available and which limits must not be violated. The aggregator does not necessarily require appliance-level behavioural data.

The network-intelligence layer evaluates voltage, congestion, transformer loading and feeder capacity. It communicates operational boundaries to the aggregator. This mechanism prevents an economically attractive schedule from being accepted when it is physically unsafe.The market layer coordinates bids, energy prices, flexibility compensation and settlement. The governance layer defines consent, data access, cybersecurity, performance verification, dispute resolution and emergency control authority.

Table 1: Architecture of the proposed distributed energy-intelligence platform

Functional layer	Representative information	Principal function	Decision responsibility
Physical resources	Generation, consumption, state of charge and availability	Provides energy and flexibility	Resource owner
Local intelligence	Comfort, mobility, reserve and device constraints	Produces a flexibility envelope	Prosumer controller
Aggregation intelligence	Portfolio forecasts and flexibility offers	Coordinates resource schedules	Aggregator
Network intelligence	Voltage, congestion and equipment loading	Tests technical feasibility	Distribution operator
Market and governance	Prices, consent, settlement and audit records	Authorizes and compensates participation	Market and regulatory institutions

A hybrid control model is proposed. Detailed participant preferences remain within local controllers. Aggregators receive flexibility envelopes rather than unrestricted personal data. Distribution operators retain authority over mandatory network-security limits. Emergency intervention is permitted only under previously defined conditions.

4.3 Simulation Scenario and Analytical Assumptions

The simulation represents a hypothetical active distribution feeder with an uncoordinated peak demand of 100 MW. It contains 2,500 participating prosumers, 45 MWh of stationary storage and 18 MW of controllable electric-vehicle charging capacity. A 15-minute coordination interval is assumed.

Prosumers can temporarily adjust selected household and commercial loads. Essential services are not interrupted. Comfort settings are allowed to vary only within participant-authorized limits. Each flexibility action is assumed to receive compensation.

Battery scheduling incorporates minimum and maximum state of charge, charging and discharging power limits, round-trip efficiency and an estimated degradation cost. Batteries retain a minimum reserve so that participation does not remove their intended backup function.Electric vehicles communicate arrival time, expected departure time, current state of charge and the minimum energy required by departure. Charging can be shifted within this window. Bidirectional vehicle-to-grid discharge is excluded from the principal simulation so that the reported contribution represents smart charging rather than assumed vehicle-energy export.

5. Analysis

5.1 Simulated Coordination Performance

The coordinated scenario produces improvements across peak demand, operating cost, renewable-energy utilization and voltage performance. The uncoordinated feeder reaches a peak of 100 MW. Flexible prosumer demand initially reduces the peak by 11 MW. Coordinated battery dispatch produces a further reduction of 15 MW, while intelligent vehicle charging decreases the remaining peak by another 8 MW.

The final coordinated peak is therefore 66 MW. Peak reduction is calculated as:

Peak Reduction (%)=PbasePbase−Pcoord×100 =100100−66×100=34%

The operating-cost index decreases from 100 to 76. This index incorporates illustrative energy-purchase cost, peak-related charges, flexibility payments and storage-degradation cost. It is not a monetary value because no specific tariff or market jurisdiction was selected.

Renewable curtailment declines from 14.5% to 5.8%. The reduction occurs because batteries absorb energy during surplus-generation periods and flexible loads move part of their consumption toward renewable availability. Local renewable-energy utilization consequently increases from 71% to 89%.

Voltage-limit violations decline from 18 simulated intervals to four. This result is associated with network-aware scheduling. The coordinator evaluates the location of flexibility rather than treating all demand reductions as physically equivalent.

Table 2: Simulated comparison of uncoordinated and coordinated operation

Performance indicator	Uncoordinated operation	Coordinated intelligence	Simulated improvement
Peak feeder demand	100 MW	66 MW	34% reduction

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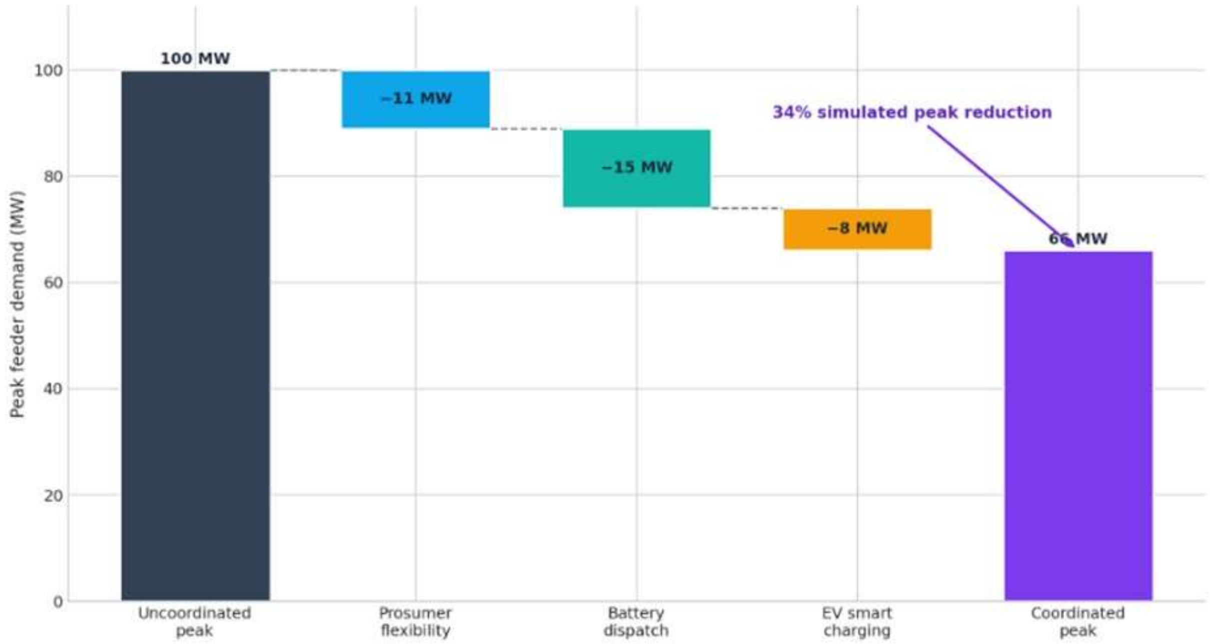
Performance indicator	Uncoordinated operation	Coordinated intelligence	Simulated improvement
Operating-cost index	100	76	24% reduction
Renewable curtailment	14.5%	5.8%	8.7 percentage-point reduction
Voltage-limit violations	18 intervals	4 intervals	77.8% reduction
Local renewable utilization	71%	89%	18 percentage-point increase

Source: Author-generated simulation. The values do not represent empirical utility performance.

5.2 Graphical Presentation of Peak Reduction

Graph 1: Simulated Contribution of Distributed Flexibility to Feeder Peak Demand Reduction



The waterfall graph separates the contribution of each flexibility source. Flexible prosumer demand reduces the peak from 100 MW to 89 MW. This represents consumption that can be delayed or temporarily moderated without eliminating the associated service.Battery dispatch makes the largest individual contribution, reducing the remaining peak to 74 MW. Batteries provide stored electricity during the constrained interval and avoid purchasing an equivalent quantity from the upstream network.

Intelligent vehicle charging reduces the peak by another 8 MW. This contribution is produced by moving charging away from the critical period rather than reducing the mobility energy delivered to vehicles. The simulated coordinated feeder therefore reaches a final peak of 66 MW.

Interpretation: The result demonstrates that different resources provide complementary forms of flexibility. Demand response modifies immediate consumption, batteries transfer energy across time and smart charging prevents avoidable demand concentration.

Key finding: The complete 34% simulated peak reduction cannot be attributed to one technology. It emerges from coordinated interaction among prosumers, storage systems and controllable electric-vehicle charging.

5.3 Reliability and Sensitivity Interpretation

The principal simulation assumes moderate forecast error and reliable communication. A less favourable condition would reduce available coordination benefits. If renewable-generation forecasts are inaccurate, batteries may not reach the expected state of charge. If electric vehicles depart earlier than anticipated, part of the scheduled charging flexibility may become unavailable.

The system should therefore avoid committing every available resource. Maintaining a flexibility reserve allows the coordinator to respond when a participant overrides an instruction or a forecast changes. The 10% reserve included in the simulation provides an illustrative protection against uncertainty.

Communication interruption presents another source of risk. A local controller that loses connectivity should enter a safe operating mode rather than continuing to follow an outdated schedule. The aggregator should detect non-response and reallocate the remaining requirement across available resources.

6. Challenges

6.1 Forecasting uncertainty

Distributed coordination depends on forecasts of demand, solar output, wind generation, prices and resource availability. Forecast errors can produce insufficient flexibility or unnecessary intervention. Rare weather conditions and changes in household behaviour may reduce model reliability.

Forecasts should be probabilistic and should include calibrated uncertainty. A coordination platform should automatically reduce its dependence on predicted flexibility when input data are missing or the operating condition differs substantially from the model’s training environment.

6.2 Interoperability

Distributed devices are produced by different manufacturers and use diverse communication protocols. Proprietary interfaces can prevent aggregation or create dependence on a single technology provider. Interoperability standards are necessary for communication among smart meters, inverters, batteries, vehicle chargers, aggregators and network systems.

Certification should verify not only whether a device can receive an instruction but also whether it reports actual response accurately. Without response verification, the aggregator cannot distinguish successful dispatch from communication or equipment failure.

6.3 Privacy and data governance

Detailed electricity-consumption information can reveal occupancy, daily routines and appliance use. Centralized collection of unnecessary data creates privacy risk. The platform should use data minimization and retain detailed information locally whenever possible.

A prosumer can communicate an aggregated flexibility envelope without disclosing every appliance event. Data-access permissions, retention periods and secondary-use restrictions should be clearly stated. Participation in coordination should not automatically authorize unrelated commercial profiling.

6.4 Cybersecurity

Connected energy resources increase the electricity system's digital attack surface. Compromised devices could transmit false measurements, refuse legitimate commands or coordinate harmful actions. A malicious actor could attempt to synchronize charging or manipulate flexibility-market prices.

Cybersecurity measures should include device authentication, encrypted communication, secure software updates, network segmentation, anomaly detection and incident-response procedures. Critical control functions should not depend on a single communication pathway or cloud service.

7. Discussion

7.1 From Independently Smart Devices to Collective Energy Intelligence

The simulation illustrates an important distinction between device-level intelligence and system-level intelligence. A battery can make a rational decision for its owner while contributing to a harmful collective outcome. If thousands of batteries charge simultaneously in response to a low price, local equipment may become congested. Coordination is therefore required to align private optimization with network conditions.

The simulated reduction from 100 MW to 66 MW is produced by combining three different forms of flexibility. Prosumer demand provides relatively immediate adjustment. Batteries shift renewable electricity into the constrained period. Smart vehicle charging prevents discretionary consumption from increasing the peak. The resources are complementary because they have different availability, duration and response characteristics.

The result supports the virtual-power-plant principle that geographically dispersed resources can be represented as a coordinated portfolio. However, aggregation is not sufficient by itself. An aggregator must understand where resources are connected and whether a portfolio schedule is technically feasible. A schedule that appears balanced in aggregate can still overload a particular transformer.

Distributed energy intelligence must consequently include both market and network awareness. Electricity prices communicate economic scarcity, while network constraints communicate physical feasibility. Neither information source should be treated as a substitute for the other.

7.2 Appropriate Distribution of Decision Authority

A fully centralized system can calculate portfolio-wide schedules using detailed information. This may improve economic efficiency but also creates privacy concerns and a significant point of operational dependency. The coordinator must process large data volumes and remain available continuously.

A fully decentralized system allows participants to retain private information and make autonomous decisions. Distributed optimization and multi-agent coordination can reach a shared solution through limited information exchange. However, convergence may be slow, and technical security may be difficult to guarantee during rapidly changing conditions.

The proposed hybrid architecture distributes authority according to function. Local controllers protect participant preferences and device constraints. Aggregators coordinate resource portfolios. Distribution operators define mandatory network limits. Market institutions calculate settlement, while regulators establish consumer-protection and accountability rules.

This arrangement prevents a commercial aggregator from becoming the sole authority over network security and private devices. It also prevents the distribution operator from acquiring unnecessary control over household behaviour. The objective is not to eliminate centralized authority but to limit it to decisions that genuinely require a system-wide perspective.

7.3 Trustworthy Intelligence and Human–System Collaboration

Artificial intelligence can improve renewable forecasting, demand prediction, anomaly detection and resource-availability estimation. Reinforcement learning can adapt control policies to repeated operating conditions, while model-predictive control can update schedules as new measurements arrive. These capabilities may improve efficiency but do not remove the need for human oversight.

A coordination platform should explain why a flexibility event was initiated, which resources were selected and how compensation was calculated. Operators need visibility into forecast uncertainty and resource non-response. Participants need understandable information about device control and financial outcomes.

Human oversight is particularly important when automated decisions affect essential energy services. A household should not lose heating, cooling or mobility because an optimization model incorrectly estimated flexibility. Local safety and comfort constraints should therefore remain enforceable even when communication with the central platform is unavailable.

Continuous-learning models require governance. An automatically updated model may gradually change its behaviour. Critical updates should be validated against safety constraints before operational use. Performance should be monitored across different seasons, resource types and participant groups.

8. Conclusion

Distributed renewable resources are transforming electricity consumers into active participants capable of generating, storing and adjusting energy. These resources create significant opportunities for decarbonization, resilience and operational flexibility. Their value, however, cannot be fully realized through independent device operation. Uncoordinated solar generation, storage and electric-vehicle charging can intensify congestion, voltage variation and demand synchronization.

This study developed a distributed-energy-intelligence framework combining local resource control, portfolio aggregation, network feasibility assessment, market coordination and governance. The framework preserves detailed participant preferences locally while allowing aggregators to coordinate flexibility envelopes. Distribution-system operators retain authority over mandatory network limits, and market institutions provide transparent compensation and settlement.

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The author-generated simulation indicates that coordinated flexibility could reduce an illustrative feeder peak from 100 MW to 66 MW. Flexible prosumer demand contributes an 11 MW reduction, battery dispatch contributes 15 MW and smart vehicle charging provides another 8 MW. The coordinated scenario also demonstrates lower simulated operating cost and renewable curtailment, fewer voltage-limit violations and greater local renewable utilization. These values are analytical illustrations and should not be generalized as measured system performance.

The main conclusion is that distributed energy intelligence represents more than an optimization algorithm. It is a socio-technical architecture in which forecasting, communication, market incentives, network security, participant autonomy and institutional responsibility must operate together. Technical coordination without trustworthy governance may fail to achieve durable participation, while market participation without network intelligence may create unsafe schedules.

Future deployment should proceed through realistic feeder modelling, shadow-mode testing, limited operational trials and independent evaluation. Programmes should incorporate uncertainty reserves, cybersecurity controls, privacy-preserving data exchange, battery-degradation compensation and accessible participation models. Under these conditions, prosumers, batteries, electric vehicles and renewable resources can function as a coordinated flexibility system rather than an unmanaged collection of independent devices.

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