

2012 BECC Conference: Poster Presenter Abstracts

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A Discussion of the Effectiveness of Online Tools to Educate Homeowners on Reducing CO2 Emissions

Improving the energy performance of existing homes in the UK will play a critical role in reducing CO2 emissions, a country in which the domestic sector is responsible for 30% of total energy consumption, and it has been estimated that properties currently in existence today will account for 80% of the residential stock in 2050. Numerous online tools exist to help homeowners identify and understand the benefits associated with installing retrofit technologies. These need to be capable of establishing and communicating technical information with non-technical users. As a result they often apply simplifications which impact on the accuracy of the calculation methodology or information provided, consequently providing a diverse range of results and recommendations, and potentially further confusion for the user. With the Green Deal coming into action in Autumn 2012 in the UK, there is a greater need to understand and appreciate the potential savings and benefits realised by installing such retrofit technologies. This study investigates the methods used to communicate energy efficiency advice to homeowners, discussing the effectiveness of the methods applied and accuracy of the results reported. The work further considers the appropriateness of the advice provided to homeowners to inform them of suitable strategies to reduce their energy bills and, more importantly, CO2 emissions.