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Selecting Behavior Changing Design Principles

The last decade, there has been an increased awareness of the potential environmental benefit from making people use their products in the most sustainable way. This has resulted in a growing field within design research, of which one of the primary results has been the identification of a large number of design principles that may lead to behavior change. However, not all principles are as likely to change the behavior of all users in all contexts. For instance, to make people avoid overfilling their tea kettles, should you give them information, feedback, make the measurements easier or make it impossible to add too much water?   An ongoing research project at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology tries to develop a guide to enable designers to make informed decisions about which behavior changing design principles they should apply. The guide combines a structuring of the design principles according to how much control they leave the user and how obtrusive the principles are, and insight from behavioral psychology about how this may affect users with different characteristics. The preliminary guide formed the basis for a booklet, describing the process from the initiation of a project, the gathering and analysis of user data, to the generation of ideas. This guide and the process have been applied in a number of design projects with the aim of making user behavior more sustainable. The proposed presentation will both introduce the guide and how it may be applied, and experiences from the practical design projects.