

Abstract #: 105

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Abstract Title: What do small businesses actually think of Business Energy Reports (BERs)?

Abstract Text:

What do small business-owners actually think about energy reports that benchmark their performance relative to similar businesses and provide recommendations to save energy? There is a large body of research focused on energy feedback in the residential sector, but significantly less in the commercial sector. Studies in both sectors have focused on the effectiveness of feedback in terms of savings outcomes, while relatively little is known about how customers experience the interface itself. This presentation reports results from usability tests with small business-owners (and/or bill-payers), revealing where report recipients look on the report itself, what they read, which information is important to them, and whether and how they take action. The findings highlight distinct areas for improvement in BERs with implications for other commercial feedback applications. These areas include ways to reduce barriers to action and the need for benchmarking against similar businesses to match a high standard for what qualifies as a meaningful comparison group.