



Behavioral Effects of the DTE Energy Insight Smart Phone App

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This study presents evaluation results for an opt-in residential behavioral program developed by DTE Energy in which participants with advanced meters can remotely monitor their energy use on an hourly and real time basis. DTE Energy's objective was to develop a mobile engagement platform to help customers discover and improve their energy consumption through a unique blend of coaching, gamification, and social elements. In addition to electricity and gas usage data, the app gives customers access to energy and money-saving recommendations, and iPhone users have the ability to scan an appliance's power cord to see how much electricity the appliance is using. Several unique features distinguish our evaluation approach. First, a survey of participants and matched controls provides insight into the issue of self-selection bias. Second, the survey will be used to identify the behavioral effects of the program using a unique battery of "live audit" questions about energy use. Third, the survey and in-app analytics analysis will identify participation drivers and participant attributes, and examine how in-app engagement patterns tie to energy use. Fourth, via a randomized encouragement design (RED), some customers are provided the opportunity to monitor household energy use on a real time basis by installing hardware (a "bridge") in their home. The RED allows an examination free of selection bias to understand how the bridge affects energy savings, use of the app, and customer satisfaction with the program. The evaluation will be complete in August 2015.