

Anne Arquit Niederberger, Enervee

Poster Title: Advances In Quantifying Savings From Choice Engine Platforms

Abstract: Beginning this year, online utility choice engine platforms originally deployed as pilots & demonstrations are transitioning to full-scale resource acquisition programs, with utilities claiming the market-based savings captured by making markets work better for consumers, without monetary incentives. Key to this transition and to scaling investment in marketing to drive increased engagement is the ability to quantify and claim the resulting energy savings. We will report recent results from utility online choice engine platforms and methods developed to quantify the influence of choice engines on actual purchases. This includes new research on survey-based methods of determining net-to-gross ratios. In particular, we studied two self-reported measures and studied to what extent the responses were correlated with product choices and their efficiency (based on the zero to 100 Enervee Score of each product model): >A single question about how influential the platform was in affecting the buying decision >A modified multi-item usefulness scale, documented to be reliable in the scientific literature. This research found the following: > "Influence" is significantly different across the Score/no Score conditions, but only just significant ($p=.04$). Influence is a very abstract term, and relying on a single question does not represent a best practice, so we anticipated this result. > The "influence" measure has no significant correlation with efficiency of product chosen (further supporting the conclusion that it is a weak proxy for platform influence on buying decisions). > The "usefulness" scale is significant at the 2% level, suggesting that this established multi-item measure is better suited to act as a self-report proxy for actual purchasing behavior than asking about influence. > The "usefulness" measure has a highly significant correlation with efficiency of product chosen ($p< .001$). These correlational analyses support the argument that a usefulness measure would be more appropriate as a self-report proxy for actual influence, especially if a sliding net-to-gross measure is considered. These results were to be expected, given shortcomings of the perceived influence question: > Social (un)desirability bias. Consumers play down self-reported influence on decision-making, as we have a tendency to protect what we feel is our mental sovereignty ("I can make up my own mind, and nothing influences me."). > We could not find any validated self-report measures for "influence" in the scientific literature; where influence was an independent variable in studies, it was determined by behavioral data, rather than self-reports. > Using a single question survey measure heightens its shortcomings.