Does lifetime electricity running costs information lead consumers to purchase more energy efficient appliances? Results from a UK trial

Dr Jeremy Vincent
Increasing the **salience** of energy efficiency to consumers…

“our attention is much more likely to be drawn to things that we can understand… We are much more likely to be able to encode things that are presented in ways that relate more directly to our own personal experiences than to things presented in a more general and abstract way”

‘MINDSPACE: Influencing behaviour through public policy’ (Cabinet Office 2010)
...and awareness of the hidden costs of laundry
UK Government’s Department of Energy & Climate Change - to protect the planet and power the country
Operating within European Union
EU sets standards and energy labels

- Ranks products at point of sale based on relative efficiency (energy per kg washed)
- Reports energy use in KWh / year
- Labelling directive under review
38 John Lewis department stores randomly allocated

- **Control**
- **Intervention**
Lifetime electricity running costs on washing machine, tumble dryer & washer dryer labels

Average KWh / year consumption * average lifetime * electricity price

• Store staff trained to discuss
• Trial ran Dec 2013 – June 2014
Running costs led to purchase of washer dryers using less energy

*Behavior, Energy & Climate Change conference, 8th Dec 2014*
...probably because washer dryers use far more energy
Focus groups with staff indicated:

• Customer decisions influenced more by other factors

• Assumptions and averages caused confusion

• Running costs information was not visible and attractive enough….
...due to logistical constraints
How are findings being used?

- **DECC policy team** feeding into review of EU review of Labelling Directive
- **John Lewis** rolling out *annual* running costs info on labels in-store & *online*
- **DECC customer insight team** – keen to do further product trials and learn from others, e.g. Berlin trial
Questions?

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