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**Title:** How Opower uses data and research to design the ideal DER customer experience

**Abstract:** As utility customers adopt DERs (distributed energy resources), their relationship with their utility changes. Their bill could be much higher (in the case of electric vehicles) or much lower (in the case of solar panels). They need help making smart energy decisions and are thinking about their use much more than they were prior to getting a DER. Since 2014, Opower has interviewed ~ 50 DER customers (and surveyed many more!) to understand their information needs and to develop products to smooth the DER transition. This session will cover the research methods used (including interviews, surveys, and utility site visits), the key insights (including customer concerns, barriers, and motivations), and ultimately how we've incorporated those insights into our suite of DER products. We will discuss what customers expect before, during, and after the DER transition, and how this experience could be improved. While the number of people with DERs is relatively small today, we expect that number to grow over the coming years. Creating a great experience for the next generation of DER customers will be crucial to drive widespread DER adoption (and the associated environmental benefits), since we know many customers make the switch to an electric vehicle or solar panels due to a word of mouth recommendation.