

Dear Mrs Coaster,

I'm responding to the various Ofgem consultation documents on smart metering. My credentials for doing so – power engineer (ex-DNO) working with various companies to partner DNOs in the LCN Fund. Ex-Sony factory engineer – energy saving @ Sony's UK factories. I also follow developments in energy saving in the residential, commercial and industrial sector. Responding to:

Question 5: Do you agree that consumers should be able to obtain consumption information free of charge at a useful level of detail and format? How could this be achieved in practice?

In principle yes – but this question works on the assumption that a significant amount of the population would

- a) make the effort to access the data if it was available,
- b) be capable of understanding it,
- c) act in a meaningful way i.e. undertaking real energy reduction measures.

Shown below is an extract from an academic paper of 2004 relevant to the above:

We can't be using that much...It's just the two of us in this two-bed flat. I am out all day...and we are on income support. I just don't know how the bills are so high... I think there is something wrong with them. - Londoner in her 30s, whilst in broad daylight lights were on in most rooms, a TV and radio were playing in an unoccupied bedroom, and all appliances in the sitting room were on standby.- Dobbyn and Thomas 2005, p26

This raises the question – “where on the population distribution curve of capability to take action with respect to energy data and energy saving” does this lady sit?

A more recent study by Energenie suggests that for the most part, the UK population is delusional, apathetic and/or lazy with respect to saving energy (or modifying their habits to save energy). The PWR article profiling this survey is shown at the bottom of the e-mail.

With respect to consumer access to data at a useful level of detail etc if the meter stores 1 years worth of data then a USB port with WiFi access should be sufficient for consumers with computers to access the data. The French roll out of 200k SMs features such a port and such access. The port would also allow, for example, in-home displays to access data (showing amount of energy consumed/cost of energy). The provision of either software to analyse consumption or in-home displays should be left to the private sector.

Data Privacy & Protection

Ofgem is placing considerable protection around household energy data and is hoping that households will “do something meaningful” with that data. Some will. However, the evidence suggests that many/most will not (= policy failure).

This leads me on to 3rd party access to consumption data and the ability of the householder to withhold this data from 3rd parties. In this case, 3rd parties will, for the most part, tend to be ESCOs (energy service companies). Such companies could make an interesting business out of helping households and companies save energy. To do so they need access to representative consumption data. Example follows.

Household: data for 7 weekdays (24hrs data) for each month – week days randomly selected. One set of weekend data per month.

The above could be and should be provided to any ESCO that requests it and would be sufficient for the ESCO's to identify good prospects to whom to offer energy saving services. I have yet to see a substantive case with respect to why all energy data needs to be private. I don't count as substantive, the ramblings of the tabloids or the Daily Mail.

The alternative to the above is to hope that the current energy suppliers in the UK will turn themselves from energy selling companies to companies focused on selling energy saving. I don't regard this as a likely prospect placing it in the same category as flying pigs.

Hope the above is interesting and perhaps even entertaining. Apologies for a legalese-free submission but I'm an engineer and tend to see things in a rather practical way.

Best regards,



Energenie (end 2009)

A survey commissioned by Energenie, a manufacturer of a range of energy saving devices, has shown that UK consumers are still not thinking about energy efficiency when purchasing electronic goods for the home. Only 16% of people considered energy efficiency an essential part of the purchasing decision. 60% of people said that price continues to be the main influencing factor on their purchasing decisions.

73% of UK families thought they were doing enough to be considered environmentally friendly. 72% claimed to have energy efficient devices in their homes.

Of those who thought they were doing enough to be considered green, 81% of people had energy saving lightbulbs in their homes, but very little adoption of other energy saving measures such as double glazing, cavity insulation or energy saving dishwashers and washing machines. There was low awareness of simple energy saving devices such as automatic standby shutdown, which provides people with a way of saving money and electricity by automatically switching off appliances properly when not in use.

- Nearly 50% of people don't switch electrical appliances off at the mains,
- 20% of men admit that they don't turn appliances off at the main because they are too lazy,
- 50% of people would be inclined to turn appliances off at the mains by remote control if they could,

The research also highlighted that consumers are increasingly aware of the money saving implication of reducing their household energy usage. 65% of people admitted the recession had made them become more aware of turning off appliances at the mains in a

bid to save money. 57% turned off appliances at the main after use (i.e. 43% do not).

Motivational factors are an element for not turning off appliances and the survey suggested that there needs to be a behavioural change. For example: 20% of men admitted to being simply too lazy to turn appliances off at the mains.