

SESSION 28

EMBRACING FUTURE EVALUATION DEMANDS – IS EVALUATION READY TO FACE FUTURE CHALLENGES?

Moderator: Claire Murray, Energy Saving Trust, UK

PAPERS:

Are Free-Riders Actually a Good Thing? Revisiting What Free-Riders Are Actually Telling Us

Patrice Ignelzi, EnerNOC Utility Solutions, Walnut Creek, CA

Bridget Kester, EnerNOC Utility Solutions, Walnut Creek, CA

Barb Ryan, EnerNOC Utility Solutions, Walnut Creek, CA

Evaluating Market Transformation in the Residential Energy Market – What to Measure? A Case Study

Michelle McGuire, Databuild Research and Solutions, UK

Training the Next Generation of Energy Efficiency Evaluators: A Report from the Field

Edward Vine, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and California Institute for Energy and Environment, Berkeley, CA

William Saxonis, New York Department of Public Service, Albany, NY

Jane Peters, Research Into Action, Portland, OR

Bobbi Tannenbaum, Madison, WI

Bob Wirtshafter, Wirtshafter Associates, Rydal, PA

SESSION SUMMARY:

This session's three papers look across major challenges that evaluators face and discuss the readiness of evaluation and evaluators to tackle the coming future demands.

The first paper, Ignezi, Kester and Ryan, explores the roles and effects of free-riders and what their actions really tell evaluators. It revisits the traditional, negative, perception of free riders and questions if aspects can actually be positive, valuable and informative. A survey of energy efficiency professionals, informal polling of colleagues and a literature review of recent studies, test this existing view of free-riders and allow the authors to make a fresh assessment of what the presence of free-riders may really be telling program evaluators. It discusses the array of opinions and perspectives on the meaning of free-riders and looks at how evaluators treat them, or should treat them, in designing and evaluating programs. It argues that free-ridership is not strictly bad news and that its value is nuanced and conditional on program type, program and market maturity, and even the way in which evaluation results are used.

The second paper, McGuire's paper, focuses on the demands of evaluating market transformation programs through consideration of a case study of research into incandescent light bulbs. It contributes to the debate on the relevant indicators that should be used to evaluate such policies, designed to bring about market transformation in the residential energy market. Based on evidence from a small scale study of residential lighting conducted by the author, the paper argues that a variety of indicators are required to get a full understanding of installations and behaviour. The results show potential weaknesses in using some data in isolation and in the importance of behavioural indicators to help mitigate against overclaim of market transformation.

The third paper, Vine et al, discusses the current training needs of the evaluation community. The authors describe the increasing importance that energy efficiency services play in the global economy and highlight how organizations are experiencing difficulty in finding people who are knowledgeable and experienced in the evaluation of energy efficiency programs. The paper presents the results of a recent survey conducted by the International Energy Program Evaluation Conference

(IEPEC) on energy efficiency evaluation training needs, complemented by a brief survey of members of the 2012 Rome Conference IEPEC Planning Committee on international needs. The paper brings the subject matter of 'training' - a topic usually discussed in informal settings at conferences - to the formal setting of the session for us all to consider and discuss.