

## **UNTANGLING CONSERVATION ON THE WEB: AN EVALUATION OF THE ENERGY IDEAS CLEARINGHOUSE**

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The Energy Ideas Clearinghouse (EIC) seeks to promote energy efficiency through a tiered system of information dissemination, including:

- A Web site
- Targeted intervention projects (TIPs)
- Technical assistance from energy specialists, engineers, and research librarians
- Live customer service for personal assistance
- A toll-free hotline

The audience for the EIC is comprised of all energy professionals, commercial and industrial energy users and marketers, as well as other decision makers in the Pacific Northwest region.

The evaluation of this program examines the degree to which the EIC 1) increases the awareness of energy conservation, 2) reduces the search and acquisition costs of energy efficiency information, and 3) results in energy savings. The evaluation will thus assess the degree to which the program has resulted in market transformation.

A number of unique approaches are implemented to evaluate the program, including:

- A Web Site benchmarking study to compare EIC website to other similar sites on the Web
- Interactive focus groups, with computer workstations, to evaluate the usability of the Web site
- An on-line survey to collect user feedback.
- Telephone surveys with a combination of 850 current users, former users, and non-users of the EIC

In addition, a factor/discriminant analysis model is developed to explain the decision-making process among users and nonusers and to identify the “innovators,” “early adopters,” and “change agents.”

The evaluation will continue over two years, and the results from the first year will be presented at the conference.