

2008 Behavior, Energy and Climate Change Conference Roundtable Abstract

5. Better Survey Design: How Can We Be More Effective at Measuring Energy Literacy and Identifying Barriers?

Moderator: Gwendolyn Farnsworth, E Source

Abstract: Participants in this roundtable discussion will review a collection of actual survey questions that have been used by a variety of organizations to measure attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, actions, and preferences relating to energy, energy efficiency, and climate change.

The survey questions will be displayed in a PowerPoint presentation and in a printed handout. We will discuss the survey questions, how they could be improved, and propose new questions that we should be asking.

Attitudes are shifting in the general public about climate change and energy. In order to design and successfully deploy behavior change campaigns that encourage smart energy use, we need to better understand how people think about energy. Many surveys ask people to rate their level of concern about global warming. Or they may ask respondents if saving energy is important to them. Often these questions only superficially address the complex attitudes and behaviors that impact energy consumption. What questions should we ask to gauge the respondent's understanding of the relationship between the electronic gadgets they use at home and global warming? What actions are they willing to take and what are they actually doing to save energy? On what topics do they lack information? We need to design surveys to measure energy literacy in the general population, and to accurately identify barriers to adopting energy efficient behaviors.