



## **Gamification for Utilities: Captivating Customers with Energy Information**

Emerging Technologies Summit  
October 21, 2014

## Outside the Utility Industry: Snow World



The latest version of SnowWorld was created for U.W. by Imprint Interactive Technology, Inc.  
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- Developed by researchers at University of Washington
- Patients play game while going through burn wound care treatments
- Clinical trials show game play sharply reduced pain levels and anxiety – **more effective than morphine**
- Gamification can be amazingly absorbing, capturing **mental focus**

## Outside the Utility Industry: Stanford Tree Project



- Game developed by researchers at VHIL, Stanford University's virtual reality lab
- Research participants used a chainsaw to cut down a tree in a virtual world
- After participants experienced cutting down a virtual tree, they used **20% less paper products** compared to participants who simply read a print description of deforestation
- Interactive, virtual experiences can drive internalized, **sustained behavior change**

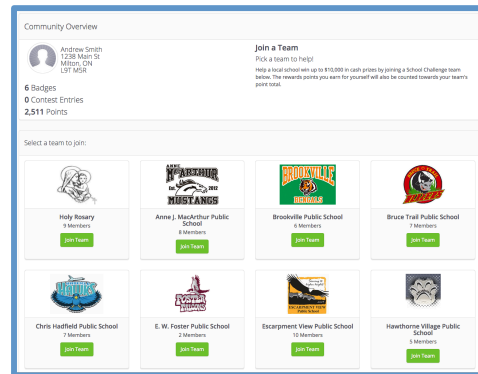
# Gamification – what is it?

- **Gamification:** “the use of game thinking and game mechanics in non-game contexts to engage users in solving problems”
- **Along a spectrum:** game-like elements ↔ full-on game

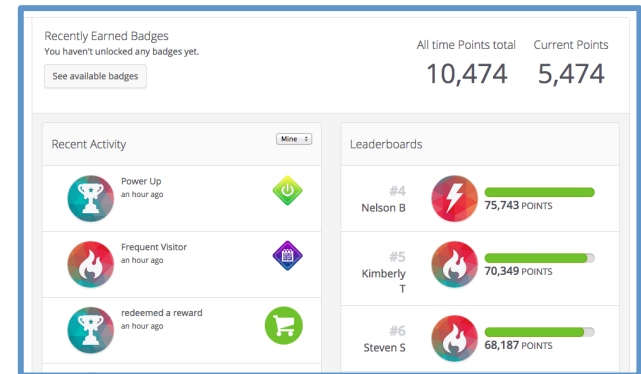
## virtual reality, interactivity



## team-based competition



## feedback: points, rewards

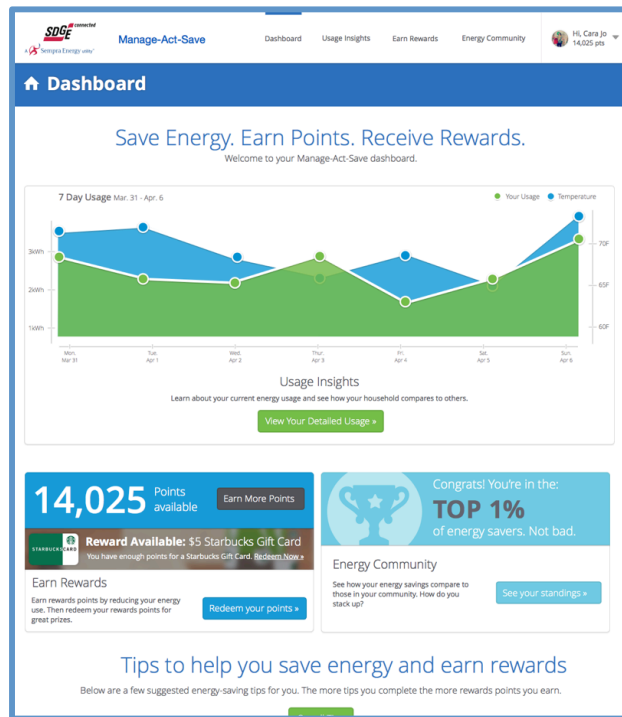


# Gamification – when is it right for you?

- Good when you need to
  - **attract focus** & attention (vs. respond to a specific request)
  - create sustained/internalized **behavior change**
  - engage a **broad range of people** as part of a mix



# Utility Gamification: Data Transformation



## Green Button Initiative

- Ability for consumers to access their smart meter data
- Great for a narrow slice of users who are actively looking for their data
- But very low usage rates across industry



Solution: Transform green button data into something more people can relate to. Gamification examples from SDG&E's Manage-Act-Save program:

- Smart meter data transformed into **points, rankings & rewards**



# Engagement Program Results

- Sustained **30-40% open rate** on weekly emails for activated users
- Less than **0.1% unsubscribe** rate on weekly emails
- Point offers successful at **driving specific behaviors**, satisfaction
  - Over 1 million points donated for San Diego fire relief by Manage-Act-Save participants
- Earlier program **EE savings of >6%** vs 1-2% for typical paper report programs
- **65%** of customers reported learning helpful energy-saving tips



The screenshot shows the SDGE Manage-Act-Save dashboard. At the top, it displays the SDGE logo and the user's address: 1234 Ocean St., San Diego, CA. The dashboard is divided into several sections:

- Energy Insights:** A bar chart comparing energy usage for the period May 16, 2014 - June 15, 2014. The chart shows three categories: Similar Households (550 kWh), YOU (276 kWh), and Efficient Households (300 kWh). The user is highlighted as a "Super Saver" with a 4-star rating, indicating their energy savings are in the top 25% for homes of similar size and location.
- Earn Rewards:** A section titled "New Reward Options" with a "Log In" button. It includes a "Log In" button and a "Redeem Points" button.
- Energy Community:** A section titled "Almost there..." with a "View Tips" button and a "View Rewards" button. It states the user is only 425 Rewards Points away from a music gift card.
- Program Offer:** A section showing a "500 pts" offer.

Category	Value
Current Points	5,653
Last 7 days points	1,040
Lifetime points	10,653
Energy use last week: 4/24/14 - 4/30/14	276 kWh
Change from prior week	▼ 3%

## Manage-Act-Save – Customer Feedback



*"The program is like a game, so it's fun to participate. Earning reward points and badges makes it fun! We...found ourselves in the top 15% or 25% of people in our area who have cut energy use the most."*

*-Rita P., San Diego, CA  
a real Simple Energy user*



# Utility Gamification: Prizes for Demand Response

## Which drives more response?

- 1) Reduce your use tomorrow to conserve energy
- 2) Reduce your use tomorrow to conserve energy and be entered to win an iPad Mini, plus receive 10X reward points

Result? Customers who signed up for alerts with rewards messaging reduced use by an **average of 10x** compared to default messaging.

The image shows a mobile app notification for a conservation day event. The notification is titled "Tomorrow is a Conservation Day!" and contains the following text: "Don't miss your chance to earn 10x the points and be entered to win a new iPad." Below this is a screenshot of the app interface showing a "Win Prizes by Saving Energy" section with a "10X POINTS" badge. To the right of the screenshot, it says "All you have to do is save energy:" followed by "TOMORROW JULY 17 2PM - 6PM". Below the screenshot, it says "To increase your chances of winning:" followed by two bullet points: "✓ Unplug appliances and electronics that are not being used" and "✓ Avoid using major appliances until after the event." At the bottom, there is a green button that says "See your energy usage".

# Utility Gamification: Milton Energy Challenge

Simple Energy recently launched the **Milton Community Energy Challenge** with Milton Hydro

- Customers chose one of 16 participating schools to support
- Energy conservation behaviors drive individual AND school team results
- Consumers help their school compete to win \$10,000 to support school programs
- Sign-ups >10% of annual program goal in first 3 weeks

Andrew Smith  
1238 Main St  
Milton, ON  
L9T M5R

6 Badges  
0 Contest Entries  
2,511 Points

**Current Team:**  
Bruce Trail Public School  
Leave Team

Thanks for joining the team. The reward points you earn for yourself will also be counted towards Bruce Trail Public School's point total giving them a chance to top the leaderboard and win great prizes.

Community Leaderboard  
based on the previous day's point total

#1	ADAM L			3,060 PTS
#2	DAVID K			3,011 PTS

School Challenge Leaderboard

School	Members	Total Points
#1 Holy Rosary	9	19,803
#2 Guardian Angels	9	18,576
#3 St. Peter	9	17,726



# Utility Gamification: SDG&E Virtual Home

SDG&E Manage-Act-Save includes virtual, interactive experience to explore tips and program offers

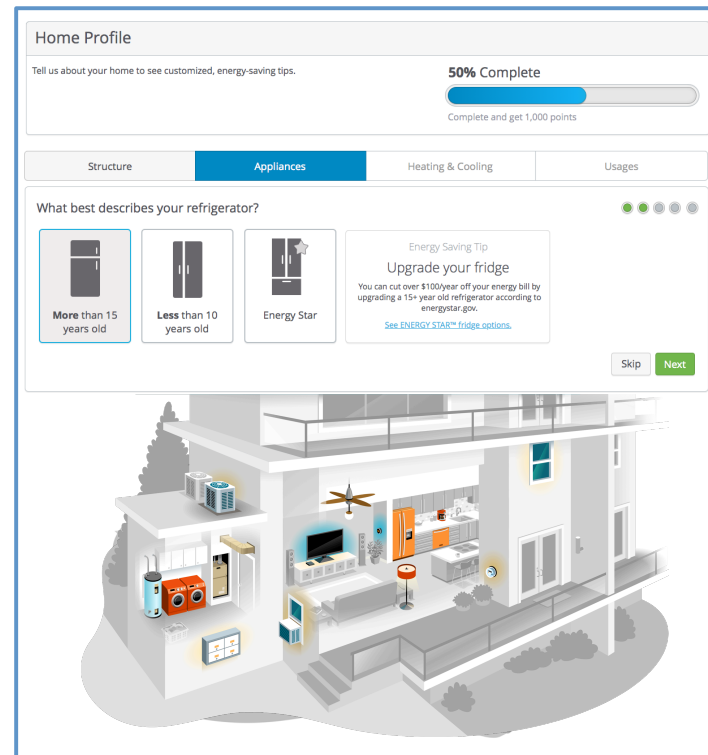
- Virtual mechanism attracts and engages customers
- Results: average time on tips page **up 53%**



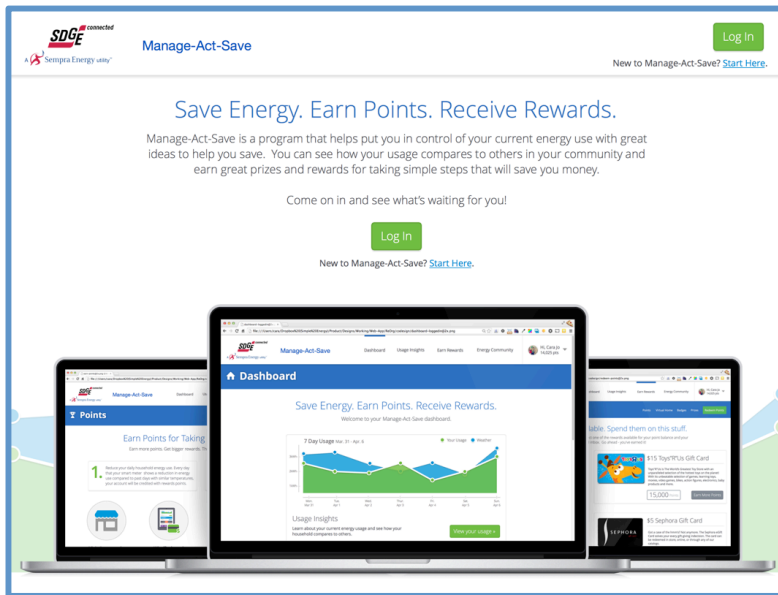
# Utility Gamification: Home Profile

Now in development with SDG&E, an interactive Home Energy Audit “Home Profile” survey

- visual questions, simply tap to answer
- progress feedback: home colors in, shows % complete
- virtual navigation option using hot spots (user-controlled flow)



# Utility Gamification: Summary



- Gamification should be a part of your **customer engagement strategy**
- Useful for **capturing focus**, internalizing **behavior change**, **broad appeal**
- Along a spectrum: **game-like elements** to full-on immersive game
  - interactive experiences, competition, feedback mechanisms like rewards/prizes
- Already **achieving results** in the utility industry space

Thank you!

**Karl Sowa**

**CMO, Simple Energy**

303.868.0742

karl@simpleenergy.com

