

Canadians Exhibit Low Levels of Interest in Managing Energy Use

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only a quarter are aware of Smart Meter technology*

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Ipsos Reid

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Calgary, AB - The supply, price, and environmental costs of electricity are increasingly important issues across Canada. Consumers can become more energy efficient and potentially reduce costs by using Smart Meters, which track how much and when electricity is used in their homes. As part of a new study, *Energy and the Internet*, Ipsos Reid investigated Canadians' awareness and interest in Smart Meter technology.

Awareness levels of Smart Meters are highest in Ontario where the provincial government has mandated that all homes will have the technology installed by 2010. The Ipsos study found that 70% of Ontarians are aware of Smart Meters with another 30% saying they had not heard of the technology prior to the survey. Awareness elsewhere in Canada is significantly lower with one quarter having heard of Smart Meters in Alberta (25%), Atlantic Canada (24%) and Quebec (23%) and just two-in-ten in British Columbia (19%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (21%).

Despite heightened environmental awareness and concern, Canadians did not show strong levels of interest in Smart Meters. Approximately a quarter (23%) said they are "extremely" or "very interested" in Smart Meters while just over a third (37%) described themselves as



being “somewhat interested”. Four-in-ten Canadians (40%) indicated that they are not interested in Smart Meters at all.

“Even in Ontario it appears that many consumers are unclear about the potential benefits of Smart Meters,” says Mark Laver, Associate Vice-President with Ipsos Reid. “Governments and electricity providers will have to continue to communicate the benefits of Smart Meters to ensure a successful roll-out and adoption by the general public. Those in other provinces in particular have a great deal of education to do before launching Smart Meters.”

The research also questioned consumers about how often they would check their electricity consumption if information was made available via the Internet. A wide range of responses were received to this query. Just under four-in-ten (37%) Canadians would use the Internet to check their electricity consumption on a hourly (1%), daily (10%) or weekly (26%) basis, while another six-in-ten (62%) say they would do so monthly (17%), when their bill arrived (25%), or whenever their bill was more or less than expected (20%).

Laver continues, “The concern is that online viewing of energy consumption data will be a novelty item for many Canadians. The challenge for energy providers will be to find ways to keep consumers coming back to these sites to learn more about conservation and their consumption habits. In numerous studies consumers say they are concerned about the environment and conservation however, they do not appear to be willing to do the work to change their behaviors.”

This release is based on the findings of an Ipsos Reid syndicated study, the Inter@ctive Reid Report, fielded from 04/11 to 04/17, 2008. This online survey of 2725 Canadian adults was conducted via the Ipsos I-Say Online Panel, Ipsos Reid's national online panel. The results are based on a sample where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's

composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data. Quota samples with weighting from the Ipsos online panel provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. An unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 1.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Mark Laver
Associate Vice President
Ipsos Reid
Public Affairs
(403) 294-7393

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