

Monday, 30 March 2009 21:19

The start-up company Adaptive Meter is aiming to make conserving energy more engaging and fun by developing an interactive game around smart meter data. The developer presented its prototype at the Green:Net Conference hosted by Earth2Tech in San Francisco last week.

Adaptive Meter believes that the game will engage consumers to motivate them to conserve energy. Smart meters certainly offer a lot of promise but if customers don't take advantage of the benefits their usefulness will be limited.

The developer previously designed Stickychicken, Twitterlike, and other web applications. The smart meter game is called [Lost Joules](#) and is centred on players betting upon each others' energy usage. Electricity customers will be able to choose whether or not they want to play the game. Customers without smart meters installed can also play by betting on whether or not customers with the devices in place are able to conserve power.

The virtual money players use in the Lost Joules game can be exchanged for real-world prizes, more virtual cash, or even real money, according to Adaptive Meter co-founders Richard Dorsey and Danny Hu.

The goal is to encourage energy consumers to conserve power through a game that is fun but is also competitive. Competition with other players will motivate participants to conserve energy in order to perform better in the game environment.

"Wouldn't it be cool if every time we unplugged an appliance or flipped a switch, somebody noticed?" said Dorsey at the presentation. "If you don't have a smart meter, the game will push you to save energy. If you reduce your energy use, people will flock to you," Dorsey explained. Game players that conserve electricity become valuable because "investors" will receive returns on their virtual investments.

Adaptive Meter has been developing the game for three months so far. It has created an online comic series to introduce the hero of the game to the public. The company says a pilot program in the works.

Dorsey said that his company is also looking for compilers of smart meter data to partner with them. In his presentation Dorsey mentioned Fat Spaniel, Google's PowerMeter, and SmartSynch as potential partners. All three firms have developed innovative and easy-to-use software that supports smart grid technology.

The game is Adaptive Meter's first venture into sustainable technology. Dorsey says the company is open to capital investment but doesn't have a specific figure in mind. He said the company will move forward with its strategy regardless if capital is raised.

The company didn't provide any details from its business plan or how it would make money from the game. It did imply that revenues would be partially generated from the virtual cash and that other money-making methods are being considered. Dorsey said that sponsorship and advertising may be another possibility but aren't the primary methods for revenue generation.

Success of the game will be largely dependent on whether or not partners can be found that will provide smart meter data. Luis Arbulu, a member of the Google.org investment team, served as a judge at the Green:Net start-up contest. He wasn't impressed with the game's potential to become a viable produce.

"It seems like a cool feature or game rather than a sustainable product," said Arbulu. "It probably would be really well on top of a Facebook application or something rather than as a [standalone game]."

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