



For Immediate Release

NOTE: Originally, we incorrectly listed Nova Scotia Power among U.S. utilities. It should be included in the list of Canadian utilities as the top-rated Canadian utility. We regret the error.

## **E SOURCE Announces Top Utility IVRs Study Finds Utilities Offer Only 54% of the Features Customers Want**

BOULDER, CO, July 29, 2009; updated October 29, 2009—This year, the top-rated U.S. electric and gas interactive voice response systems (IVRs) belong to Florida Power & Light Co., Portland General Electric, Allegheny Power, NW Natural, Baltimore Gas and Electric Co. (BGE), and South Carolina Electric and Gas, according to the latest E SOURCE benchmark results for the performance of North American electric and gas company IVRs. Nova Scotia Power earned the top ranking for Canadian utility IVRs. BGE has the most-improved IVR. In the 2007 review, BGE was ranked 93, but this year it moved into the top five.

The “E SOURCE 2009 Review of North American Electric and Gas Company IVRs” examined the IVR systems of 95 U.S. and Canadian utilities. Researchers spent a cumulative eight hours reviewing each IVR. To ensure quality control, all of the IVR features were reviewed a second time by a different reviewer. Between December 2008 and March 2009, four typical residential energy customers called the utility IVRs. They looked for and rated 13 tasks and functions that had been identified by a 2008 E SOURCE market research study as the options residential customers most strongly think that utilities should offer on the IVR. Applying this data and a consistent methodology, E SOURCE ranked the IVRs on an index of usability and functionality.

Maggie Boys, a senior research associate at E SOURCE, said, “We found many missed opportunities. Utility companies on average are offering only 54 percent of the features customers want. We refer to this as a service gap—the difference between what customers want and what utilities are offering. Finding the overall cause of the service gap is an essential first step in building a positive and economical IVR experience for customers.”

**Eastern U.S.** Allegheny Power is the highest-ranking utility in the eastern region. Other top performers include Baltimore Gas and Electric and PECO.

**Midwestern U.S.** Wisconsin Public Service captured the top ranking in the midwestern region. Peoples Gas (Illinois) and Xcel Energy round out the top three.

**Southern U.S.** Florida Power & Light ranks highest in the southern region. The next two highest scores were earned by South Carolina Electric and Gas and Cleco.

**Western U.S.** Portland General Electric earned the top rank in the western region. NW Natural and PacifiCorp earned the next two highest scores.

**Canada.** Nova Scotia Power garnered the highest ranking among Canadian utility IVRs. Other top performers include Manitoba Hydro and Terasen Gas.

Source: “E SOURCE 2009 Review of North American Electric and Gas Company IVRs”  
*Charts and graphs extracted from this press release must be accompanied by a statement identifying E SOURCE as the publisher and “E SOURCE 2009 Review of North American Electric and Gas Company IVRs” as the source. No advertising or other promotional use can be made of the information in this release without the express prior written consent of E SOURCE.*

“Based on some of our earlier research, we know that of those customers who use an IVR to complete a self-service transaction, 70 percent were successful in completing that transaction on the first try. However, those same customers stated that they were not satisfied with the experience,” said Rich Goodwin, manager of the *E SOURCE Utility Customer Care Service*. “With information from this benchmark study, utilities will know how to improve their IVRs to directly enhance their customers’ experience, thereby increasing the number and the satisfaction of customers who choose self-service options.”

E SOURCE market research conducted in 2008 revealed that utility customers consistently report lower levels of satisfaction when they use an IVR when compared to talking directly with a phone agent, dealing in person with an agent, or even interacting with their utility web site. The top-rated utilities in the E SOURCE benchmark study have designed their IVRs with their customers in mind, and they make it easy for their callers to find and use the automated services. Unfortunately, many utilities provide systems that fail to consider the customer’s experience. They often frustrate their customers to the point that they either opt to speak to a live agent or simply hang up.

For more information about the “E SOURCE 2009 Review of North American Electric and Gas Company IVRs,” please visit [www.esource.com/public/products/IVR\\_2009\\_Review](http://www.esource.com/public/products/IVR_2009_Review).

#### **About E SOURCE**

E SOURCE has been providing unbiased, objective energy business intelligence to over 300 utilities and large energy users for more than 20 years. Our benchmarking services are supported by the latest market research looking at what customers want in utility self-service. That research helps us determine what utility IVR and web site tasks and functions should be assessed during our reviews. Our research analysts and consultants are among the best minds in the business, delivering significant and timely research that equips our customers with the right information at the right time to make better, faster decisions. We predict and address trends, technologies, and problems related to energy efficiency, utility customer satisfaction, program design, marketing, customer management, and sustainability.

#### **Public Relations Contact**

For details about scheduling interviews with the research staff or service manager involved with this benchmark study, please contact:

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NOTE: One chart follows.

## 2009 Performance Ranking of U.S. and Canadian IVRs

Functionality and average usability ratings for each of the 95 IVRs reviewed were equally weighted and then combined to determine each IVR's overall performance index number, with a maximum possible value of 1,000. The IVRs were then ranked in descending order by performance index number. Because the updated 2009 methodology meant that most companies have lower scores than in 2007, we recommend comparing your ranking, rather than your scores, against the 2007 results.

Ranking	Organization name	Performance index
<b>Top quartile</b>		
1	Florida Power & Light	764
2	Portland General Electric	749
3	Allegheny Power	741
4	NW Natural	722
5	Baltimore Gas and Electric	707
5	South Carolina Electric & Gas	707
7	Wisconsin Public Service	697
8	Peoples Gas (Illinois)	685
9	Cleco	679
10	Louisville Gas & Electric	666
10	PacifiCorp	666
12	NV Energy (South)	662
13	Xcel Energy	651
14	PECO Energy	647
15	Los Angeles Department of Water & Power	639
16	Avista Utilities	638
16	Sacramento Municipal Utility District	638
18	Duke Energy (South)	636
18	PPL Electric Utilities	636
18	Southern California Gas	636
21	Duquesne Light	635
22	DTE Energy	624
23	Arizona Public Service	620
24	Centerpoint Energy (Houston)	610
24	Progress Energy Carolinas	610
24	We Energies	610

Source: "E SOURCE 2009 Review of North American Electric and Gas Company IVRs"  
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<b>Second quartile</b>		
27	Central Maine Power	609
27	Nova Scotia Power	609
29	PNM	606
30	Dominion Virginia Power	605
30	Vectren	605
32	Consumers Energy	596
33	Salt River Project	591
34	Alliant Energy	589
34	MidAmerican Energy	589
34	Oklahoma Natural Gas	589
34	UGI Utilities	589
34	Westar Energy	589
39	Idaho Power	585
39	NorthWestern Energy	585
41	AEP Ohio	573
41	Philadelphia Gas Works	573
41	Silicon Valley Power	573
44	Tampa Electric	568
45	Laclede Gas	567
46	AmerenUE	564
46	Manitoba Hydro	564
48	Dayton Power & Light	558
48	Long Island Power Authority	558
<b>Third quartile</b>		
50	Terasen Gas	543
51	Oklahoma Gas and Electric	542
52	Southern California Edison	541
53	Austin Energy	537
53	Omaha Public Power District	537
55	Memphis Light, Gas and Water	526
56	Gaz Métro	522
57	Georgia Power	517
58	Jersey Central Power & Light	511
58	NSTAR	511
58	San Diego Gas & Electric	511
61	CPS Energy	502
61	Questar Gas	502
63	Con Edison	495
64	Union Gas	492
65	Pacific Gas and Electric	485
66	NB Power	484
66	Southwest Gas	484
68	Hydro One Networks	481
69	ENMAX	467
70	Black Hills Energy	466
70	Missouri Gas Energy	466
70	Nicor Gas	466

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Fourth quartile		
73	Connecticut Light and Power	449
73	Puget Sound Energy	449
75	Pepco	442
75	Washington Gas	442
77	Enbridge Gas Distribution	439
77	Toronto Hydro	439
79	BC Hydro	430
79	ComEd	430
81	Hawaiian Electric Company	392
82	Columbia Gas of Ohio	367
83	Hydro Ottawa	365
83	Piedmont Natural Gas	365
85	EPCOR	342
85	National Grid New York	342
87	Entergy Louisiana	341
87	Hydro-Québec	341
87	New York State Electric & Gas	341
90	Public Service Electric and Gas	324
91	Kansas City Power & Light	282
92	Atmos Energy	279
93	TXU Energy	264
94	Direct Energy (Texas)	240
95	Reliant Energy	199

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