



For Immediate Release

E Source Study Rates Best Electric and Gas Utility Web Sites

BOULDER, Colo., October 15, 2002—Arizona Public Service Company, Carolina Power & Light Company, Duke Power, and Florida Power Corporation have the four best electric and gas utility web sites, according to an independent, comprehensive review of over 100 North American and international utility web sites conducted by E Source.

During the summer of 2002 the web sites of the largest electric and gas companies in North America were reviewed, along with a representative set of web sites from international and medium and smaller energy companies. Each web site was assessed from the point of view of the customer. The review examined ease of use for the services offered and the functions supported by each web site.

The research explored more than just the “overall web site”—it examined individual web pages, specifically pages offering online services to customers. A total of over 1,700 electric and gas web pages were searched for and assessed.

The web sites of Arizona Public Service Company, Carolina Power & Light Company, Duke Power, and Florida Power Corporation each supported about 90 percent of the pages and functions searched for, and all four sites had pages that were ranked among the highest when measured for usability, or ease of use, for a customer.

“First-generation electric and gas company web sites were designed with investors, employees, the press, and even the CEO in mind,” said Andrew Heath, director of the *E Source E-Business Service*. “Many of the early reviews of utility web sites were primarily concerned with the richness of the sites—few addressed the needs of utility customers, including the ease of use of the web site. This survey paid special attention to the ease of finding and using the features offered on electric and gas web sites.

“With the still very low levels of traffic at utility web sites, one of the primary benefits the electric and gas company can offer a customer is a channel to use that is as easy as or easier than the existing channels supported by the mail and telephone. If a site is not easy to understand and use, then electric and gas companies should not be surprised if their customers continue to use the existing, more expensive channels,” Heath said.

The study revealed that across the industry, there is a marked difference between the best in class and the also-rans—both in terms of the functions supported and the usability of the functions. Half of the energy industry sites reviewed earned ratings of “Poor” to “Moderate” when examined from a customer’s point of view, and on average, energy web sites supported only two-thirds of the functions customers would be interested in using.

Some sites such as Connecticut Light & Power, Niagara Mohawk, Southern California Edison, MidAmerican Energy, and Cincinnati Gas & Electric were rated highly for the functions they supported. Sites such as Wisconsin Electric Power, Alabama Power, Massachusetts Electric, Wisconsin Public Service, Alliant Energy, Portland General Electric, Tampa Electric, and Georgia Power all scored well in terms of usability.

The survey was completed between July and October 2002. A total of 1,779 individual web pages were searched for and then rated for ease of use. Quality-control procedures were used to ensure that a potentially subjective measure—ease of use—was applied consistently across reviewers and throughout the survey period.

About E Source

Headquartered in Boulder, CO, E Source is a leading research and information services organization, providing member organizations with unbiased, independent analysis of retail energy markets, services, and technologies. Additional information is available at www.esource.com.

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