This past year, I got to work on a project that involved one of my favorite subjects: websites. Our Review of Electric and Gas Company Residential Websites measures how well utility websites engage residential customers; it also assesses website improvements as they relate to customer needs.

This is my second time reviewing utility websites at E Source, and it’s always a pleasure to see how much effort utilities put into making their customers’ online experience a good one. It’s also rewarding to see how many improvements have been made since the study first started in 2002. I want to again congratulate our top three best-performing websites for 2015: SRP, ComEd, and NV Energy.

Although utilities have come a long way in designing more-user-friendly websites, they still need to keep up with customer’s constantly changing technology needs and website expectations. To meet these demands, utilities will need to thoughtfully and diligently enhance their sites with an eye on customer experience. Our 2015 study found that:

- Appearance matters and presents an area of improvement for utilities because it directly affects usability.
- Summarizing important information on each page on a website in an easy-to-use format such as a table can improve the customer experience.
- Rate and pricing option presentment can be made more user-friendly.
- Customers expect a mobile-optimized experience.
- It’s important to provide consistency (in look, feel, and brand) across all pages of a website and work toward an omnichannel approach to website design.

When considering an update or redesign on a website, utilities should keep the customer top of mind, making sure that any changes improve the customer experience rather than strain it.
E Source has a plethora of resources available to help utilities make improvements to their websites. Most recently, we’ve been working on quick looks at our market research data. Check out our data-dense but glitzy ebook *How to Improve Your Utility Customers’ Website Experience*. It examines ways that utility websites are keeping up with customer expectations, which website attributes are most important to customers, and which best practices to follow when designing a website.

We also offer the following resources, all of which can be found in our Utility Website Design Center tool:

- A press release showing rankings and top findings from the 2015 study
- Research results (PPTX) based on our in-depth industry findings
- A recording and presentation from our web conference where we discussed our key learning
- Design Guides that provide feature best practices with illustrative screenshots
- Individual Improvement Reports that show individual utility results and our recommendations for improvement

What are your thoughts about trends in utility websites? Leave a comment below or send us an email. We’re always looking for ways to help utilities optimize their websites. And I’ll take any chance I can get to talk about one of my favorite subjects! Go websites!

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