



Case Study: British Columbia, Canada schools; 4/2011

British Columbia “Do It In the Dark” Energy Reduction Competition Saves 125,000 Kilowatt-hours in Residence Halls

Three weeks, 125,000 kilowatt-hours

Final results have been announced for "Do It In the Dark" Energy Reduction Competition which took place among nine college and university campuses in British Columbia. *Do It In the Dark* engaged thousands of students in conservation behavior, and the results are impressive. Students saved more than 125,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity and over \$9,000, and averted 7,125 pounds of carbon dioxide. *Do It In the Dark* demonstrates how friendly competitions can be used as a powerful platform for motivating individual behavior change and conservation.



The three-week event, which took place in March in British Columbia, had 36 residence halls across nine campuses competing against each other to achieve the greatest percent reduction in electricity use. The top reducing school, Okanagan College, was able to reduce consumption 29.4% below the competition baseline.

Total savings accrued during the competition is equivalent to powering approximately 100 homes for a full month. "These competitions help provide an engaging platform and a compelling social context for conserving resources. The little steps that people take during competitions makes it easier and more likely that they take the big steps, and reinforce the idea that everyone can contribute," said Andrew deCoriolis, Director of Public Programs at Lucid Design Group.

Rewards, incentives, and community recognition

Do It In the Dark featured some of the leading colleges and universities from British Columbia: Okanagan College, University of Northern British Columbia, University of the Fraser Valley, University of British Columbia Okanagan, University of Victoria, Simon Fraser University, Thompson Rivers University, University of British Columbia Vancouver and Vancouver Island University.

The competition successfully leveraged social networking sites, and many schools offered prizes to building residents who shared their commitments to conserve energy on Facebook or Twitter. For example, residents in the top-reducing building Skaha House (Okanagan College) who made social commitments on their Dashboard were entered into daily contests for gift certificates, groceries and movie tickets. Organizers also rewarded students who made regular commitments or postings about the completion with a *Do It In the Dark* t-shirt.

Top reducers:

1. Okanagan College (29.4%)
2. University of Northern British Columbia (27.4%)
3. University of the Fraser Valley (20.1%)

Do it in the Dark was sponsored by Go Beyond and Campus Climate Network, and was used as one of many ways to improve energy habits and raise awareness of energy conservation. Campus Climate Network is a partnership of climate change and sustainability organizations at high schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions across British Columbia.

Using Building Dashboard® to track competition standings

The competition was organized around and continually monitored using Lucid's Building Dashboard platform, which allowed participating buildings to instantly compare performance, share winning strategies and track current standings as the competition progressed. The platform, which provides real-time feedback on resource use for hundreds of residence halls across the U.S. and Canada, supported manual meter readings for participating buildings which have not yet been equipped with automated electric meters.

Conclusion

Examples such as *Do It In the Dark* continue to demonstrate that providing building occupants with intuitive feedback on their electricity consumption, rewards or incentives, and a meaningful social context and competitive environment can result in significant resource use reductions in buildings.

Read more about *Do It In the Dark*: <http://www.go-beyond.ca>

