



Source	Title	Date	Link	Category
Harris Interactive	Consumers Have Little Awareness of Smart Grid and Smart Meters	Feb 25, 2010	<a href="http://budurl.com/mercomhica">http://budurl.com/mercomhica</a>	Study News

## Consumers have little awareness of Smart Grid and Smart Meters

**New York, N.Y. — February 25, 2010** — Utility companies across the U.S. are committing billions of dollars in projects to upgrade the electric grid and install new meters in homes and businesses. Yet two thirds of Americans have never heard the term **Smart Grid** (68%) and 63% have not heard of **Smart Meter**. These are some of the results of *The Harris Poll* of 2,576 adults surveyed online between January 18 and 25, 2010 by **Harris Interactive**.

A majority of U.S. adults (57%) are aware of how much electricity they are consuming, and an even greater number (67%) say they would reduce their usage if they had visibility to it. A fundamental promise of **Smart Meters** is to provide this continuous feedback, and in the future consumers could be charged a cost per kilowatt that varies depending on the cost to produce. If this type of pricing replaces the current flat rate charged, 75% of Americans “want to be able to see and control how much electricity” they are using. There is, however, a core of U.S. adults (22%) who do not want the electric company to know how much power they are using each minute.

Using what they have read or heard about **Smart Grid**, consumers are unsure about what makes upgrades to the electric system necessary or advantageous. Two in five (42%) Americans were unable to outright agree or disagree with the statement “The electricity system is fine the way it is and **Smart Grid** is not necessary.”

When asked about the impact of **Smart Grid** on the security, reliability, and increased renewable sources of energy on the electric system, at least one-half of Americans expressed uncertainty. However, those familiar with **Smart Grid** are more likely to see positive impacts than those who are unfamiliar.

The general population is also uncertain about what will happen to the cost of electricity once these investments are made, and as such are very unwilling to pay for it. Those familiar with **Smart Grid** are more likely to believe that the cost of electricity will increase once it is deployed (51%) than those who have not heard of **Smart Grid** (39%). They are also more willing to pay a 10% premium on their electric bill now for the future benefits (22% vs. 11%).

### So what?

The combination of low awareness and the massive amount of investment dollars going into upgrades to the system present utility companies with the perfect opportunity to begin educating consumers. A better understanding of why these upgrades to the system are needed can positively impact acceptance. “While the need for and benefits of **Smart Grid** and **Smart Meter** may seem obvious to industry insiders, this is not the case with consumers. In light of the huge investments about to be made that ratepayers will ultimately be responsible for, utility companies need to formulate, test, and launch a sustained communication strategy,” says Tish Pasqual, Senior Research Director, Harris Interactive Business and Industrial, Harris Interactive.

**Table 1**

**AWARENESS OF SMART GRID / SMART METER** (Base: All adults)

“Have you ever heard of the term ‘Smart Grid’ Smart Meter?”

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
	%	%	%
Smart Grid	32	68	-
Smart Meter	26	63	9

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

***Intelligent Grid Solutions, LLC has been granted permission from MERCOM to post this article as a courtesy and benefit to those who visit this web site. This article appeared in the March 1, 2010 issue of "MERCOT Market Intelligence Report for SMART GRID."***

***DISCLAIMER: Neither Mercom nor Intelligent Grid Solutions, LLC assumes any liability for the accuracy and/or validity of any/all information contained in this report.***

Intelligent Grid Solutions, LLC  
6471 East Radcliff Avenue, Englewood, CO 80111  
[www.intelligentgridsolutions.com](http://www.intelligentgridsolutions.com) or [www.gridsrus.com](http://www.gridsrus.com)