

EUROPEAN UTILITY WINNERS

The winners of the European Utility Awards for 2007 were announced at the 9th Metering, Billing/CRM Europe in Vienna, Austria in October.

The awards acknowledge excellence within the industry with the recognition of key projects from utilities and their service providers that have applied practical metering, billing and CRM to achieve improvements in performance.

The awards are made in three categories, Business Performance, Customer Excellence and Innovation. In announcing the winners for 2007 Harry Wildeboer, executive partner of Accenture, sponsors of the awards, said the nominations for the awards for 2007 represented innovation at all levels of the value chain, from the technology opportunities through customer ease of use and business potential.

BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

The winner in the Business Performance category was Hanze University in Groningen, The Netherlands, for its intelligent infrastructure for consumer energy management project.

The project comprises a smart meter and gateway connecting the meter with the Internet and common consumer appliances – dishwashers, fridges, boilers, etc. – that have been adapted with embedded energy measurement units and power line communication. In this way the devices are enabled them to communicate with each other over standard household power lines. A concept of “negotiating for energy” has also been developed, in which a certain appliance has to “request” the use of electricity, while other appliances can act as a buffer, enabling demand side management and peak shaving.

The project is based on Echelon’s LonWorks technology, and results in the consumer having to make only limited energy choices, e.g. priority at installation time and based on a simple colour-coded system (red/green).



Gerard Nanninga, project leader, Hanze University

In assessing the project the judges felt that while it is still in its early days and the future will tell if it is a truly workable, cost effective and customer appealing solution, it appears to be very promising, with major business potential.

CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE

The winner in the Customer Excellence category was Växjö Energi AB and WM-data for their energy efficiency project, EnergiKollen.

The project has involved the development and construction of a smart metering-based feedback system that visualises energy usage in a pedagogical and



PLC-enabled consumer appliances

interesting way to foster greater understanding by customers of their energy consumption. All of Växjö Energi’s customers are now able to monitor their energy consumption via the Internet and the system contains warning functions, for example if energy consumption increases or if the peak load in a building exceeds a given value the customer will be notified by email.

A novel aspect is the inclusion of a pervasive gaming function, which allows customers, individually or as teams, be they within a building or even in opposite parts of the city, to compete against each other in saving energy and further stimulate thinking on energy consumption.

The project was felt by the judges to be a very promising practical step towards widespread consumption feedback-based demand response and the creation of a more energy conscious society.



Kristian Kjellin and Jan Johansson from Växjö Energi



Energy performance and alarms for a large customer

INNOVATION

The winner in the Innovation category was Sentec for its Lattice gas meter technology.

Lattice is a fully electronic, extremely low cost gas meter technology that “marks” the gas and measures its “time of flight” between two points to calculate the volume usage. Based on components widely used in common

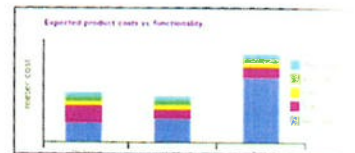
consumer products Lattice has no moving parts to degrade or wear, simplifying the design and reducing the manufacturing costs. With AMM/smart functionality added, the resultant total cost would be much lower than can be achieved with hybrid mechanical smart metering solutions, so enabling smart gas meter rollout in territories where previously it has not been economically feasible.

Lattice has been developed to the stage where it is ready to be integrated into pre-production meter designs, suitable for type approval testing, and discussions are now under way with potential partners to license the technology.

Lattice was felt by the judges to be an innovation with significant potential for gas metering and smart gas metering particular. **MI**



Tom Fryers and Mark England from Sentec



Expected costs of Lattice vs functionality

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