

# First Utility and Warwick University use behavioural science to discover innovative ways to save energy

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First Utility, with offices in Warwick and Coventry, is the largest challenger to the Big Six energy providers and has teamed up with Warwick Business School to find innovative ways to save energy. With energy costs increasing and UK emissions-reduction targets in place, keeping domestic energy consumption down is important - both for lowering bills through less energy waste and reducing the need for new emission-intensive generation capacity.

The Nudgeathon – a behavioural change competition – saw teams of students from 24 countries and various universities pitch their energy-saving ideas to a panel of judges which included Bill Wilkins, Chief Information Officer at the locally-headquartered energy firm, [First Utility](#).

The winning concept came from a team of six students attending Warwick University, City University London and Oxford University. They proposed the idea of using heat-imaging cameras to photograph students' rooms and post the pictures in communal areas to allow students to compare their own energy usage to that of their peers. The idea based on social norms and behavioural economics proved most popular with the judges.

Offering his congratulations to the winning team on their success, Bill Wilkins, Chief Information Officer, First Utility said:

"As an energy company that strives to be different from the rest, we are always looking for ways to do more for our customers. Taking part in the competition has given us ideas on how to use behavioural science theories to find new ways to encourage our customers to spend less than they have to on their energy bills and more on what they want."

The winners – Romil Depala, Daniel Banki, Rory Flanagan, Gervase Poulden, Rhea George and Olivia Stevens – also came up with the idea of having incentives in place to encourage energy saving habits on campus. They suggested a system where the students whose buildings saved the most amount of energy would receive a portion of the savings as a reward.

When asked about their win, Warwick students Daniel Banki and Rory Flanagan said:

"It was a lot of fun taking part in the Nudgeathon; it was a great experience to be able to pitch our ideas, based on reinforcing energy-saving habits, to industry experts. It was also interesting to see how our degrees in Psychology and Behavioural and Economic Science can help students save on energy as well as allow them to contribute to the UK's move towards lower carbon emissions."

Daniel Read, Professor of Behavioural Science, Warwick University added:

"The Nudgeathon was a great success with some really interesting ideas. The winners stood out because they looked at how they would maintain their ideas in the long run and permanently change behaviour. Their ideas are an innovative use of many insights from behavioural science.

"It was also a privilege to have the support of First Utility and to see that they are a pioneering company that's happy to encourage students to achieve something that may have a genuine impact on people's lives."

## About First Utility

First Utility is the UK's fastest growing and largest independent energy supplier. It supplies gas and electricity to around 900,000 customers throughout the UK and is committed to helping them reduce their energy bills by offering cheaper tariffs, helping customers use less energy through the use of innovative technology and campaigning for industry change.

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