

AMEREN ILLINOIS SMART THERMOSTAT CUSTOMER PREFERENCE STUDY

Detailed Results

FINAL

October 11, 2019



Agenda

- Introductions
- Study objectives
- Study methodology
- Detailed findings
 - State of the thermostat market
 - Customer behaviors
 - Customer thermostat preferences
 - Customer segmentation
- Conclusions and implications
- Additional survey results, segment profiles, and appendix



INTRODUCTIONS



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STUDY OBJECTIVES



Study Objectives

- Assess current state of the thermostat market
- Understand thermostat replacement behaviors
- Understand customer temperature preferences and thermostat operation behaviors
- Understand customer thermostat preferences and the effect of various thermostat attributes on consumer purchase decisions
- Capture market shares, awareness, use, and preferences for other technologies of program interest
- Ameren Illinois program awareness and participation



STUDY METHODOLOGY



Data Collection Approach

- Quantitative general population survey
- Quantitative participant survey



Data Collection Approach – Quantitative General Population Survey

Target Population

Ameren Illinois residential customers

Survey Mode

- Web with available inbound phone
- Discrete choice module on web survey only

Survey Outreach

- Mailed postcard invitations and reminders to 3,763 customers
- Offered incentives up to \$15 to encourage participation

Survey Administration

- Fielded in January 2019
- 496 customers completed

Demographic Weights

- Post-stratification weights help ensure representativeness of results
- Weighted results by home ownership and age



Data Collection Approach – Quantitative Participant Survey





Discrete Choice Shopping Exercise Design

- Aims to replicate thermostat shopping experience
- Comprehensive set of product attributes and levels
 - 5 products per choice set
 - 12 choice sets per respondent

	nest.	EMERSON	द्भecobee	Honeywell	Honeywell	
	72	72	(75)	2000 5 10 2 00 5 10 2 00 6 00 6 00 6 00 6 00 6 00 6 00 6 0		
Price	\$25	\$225	\$185	\$105	\$25	
Energy bill savings	Up to \$150/yr	Up to \$50/yr	Up to \$200/yr	Up to \$100/yr	Up to \$50/yr	
Installation cost	DIY/free self-install	+\$100 professional	+\$150 professional	+\$100 professional	DIY/free self-install	NONE: I wouldn't
Programmable	1	~	1	1	×	choose any of these.
Home sensing	×	~	×	×	×	
Learning feature	×	1	×	~	×	
Remote access	×	1	×	~	×	
Voice command	1	×	×	~	×	
Occupancy sensing	×	~	×	~	×	
	Select	Select	Select	Select	Select	Select





General Population Survey Analysis

- Thermostat Discrete Choice
 - Latent class modeling to quantify preferences and define segments
 - Relative importance of thermostat attributes to customers
 - Price elasticity for smart thermostats
 - Shares of preference simulations under various conditions
 - Characterization of latent class segments
- Descriptive statistics for non-discrete choice survey data analysis (frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, etc.)



DETAILED FINDINGS



Definitions



Manual

Allows the user to set the temperature and adjust it up or down as desired by manually turning a dial or moving a lever; the temperature setting only changes when the user adjusts the thermostat.



Programmable

Uses the built-in calendar and clock to adjust the temperature according to programmed settings by day and time but are <u>not</u> Wi-Fi-connected. These thermostats are also called "setback thermostats" or "clock thermostats".



Smart

In addition to doing everything a programmable thermostat does, these thermostats connect to the Internet and allow the user to adjust the temperature through smartphones or tablets. Some also automatically tailor settings based on occupant preferences, heating system type, home energy profile, and outdoor temperature.





State of the Thermostat Market



Key Findings



- Smart thermostats are relatively uncommon and represent 8% of all thermostats in Ameren's service territory though their market share has increased dramatically over the past year
- Customers who currently have smart thermostats fit the profile of early adopters, particularly those who participated in the Retail Products Initiative
 - They are more tech-savvy, younger, more affluent, and have higher levels of educational attainment
- Customers who have replaced their thermostats over the past three years have taken varied journeys
 - Nearly two-thirds who replaced their thermostats did so because of a precipitating event an HVAC upgrade, a thermostat failure, or a new addition to their home. These customers were more likely to install a programmable or manual thermostat, largely due to their reliance on contractors who recommended the device
 - Just over one-third upgraded a functioning thermostat and were slightly more likely to install a smart thermostat than a programmable one and very few customers chose a manual thermostat
- Reducing energy consumption is not a priority for smart thermostat owners. In fact, they are less
 likely than other customers to be concerned with reducing their energy use

Smart Thermostat Market Saturation

- Programmable thermostats are the most commonly used thermostat type in customer homes
- Smart thermostats represent 8% of all thermostats
- On average, there are 1.19 thermostats per home
- 1.2 million thermostats are available for replacement*
 - 23% of households do not have Internet capabilities to take advantage of all smart thermostat features
 - 955,000 Wi-Fi enabled smart thermostat potential

*Removes households that do not have a thermostat (1%)

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Number of Thermostats in an Average Home **1.19**

Thermostat Replacement Journey

- Just under half of customers have thermostats that were already installed in their homes when they moved in, while the
 remaining customers replaced their thermostats since moving into their current home
- Only 1% of customers moved into a home that had a smart thermostat installed
- Close to two-thirds of customers who replaced their thermostats did so because of a precipitating event an HVAC upgrade, thermostat failure, new addition to their home, while just over one-third did so to upgrade a functioning thermostat
- Customers who install thermostats due to a precipitating event are much more likely to install a programmable thermostat whereas customers who upgrade their existing thermostat are slightly more likely to install a smart thermostat





Thermostat Replacement Customer Journey (cont.)

 Contractors play an important role in the selection of thermostats, particularly as part of an HVAC system upgrade





Thermostat Replacement Customer Journey (cont.)

- Contractors are more likely to install programmable and manual thermostats than smart thermostats
- Customers select programmable thermostats followed by smart thermostats



Thermostat Replacement Trends

- The market share for smart thermostats is increasing dramatically over the past year
 - 61% of customers who replaced their thermostats in 2018 installed a smart thermostat, compared to just 12% of those who replaced their thermostats between 2016 and 2017
- Nearly half of customers who have replaced their thermostats did so between 2016 and 2019





Smart Thermostat Customer Preference Study

Sociodemographic Characteristics of Thermostat Owners

- Compared to manual and programmable thermostat owners, smart thermostat owners are more likely to be younger, more
 affluent, have higher levels of educational attainment, reside in single-family homes, have bigger homes, and own their
 homes
- These characteristics are even more pronounced among smart thermostat owners who participated in the Retail Products Initiative and are consistent with early adopters

	Summer .		72°	72°
			(General Population)	(Participants)
Reside in single-family homes	61%	81%	86%	96%
Homeowners	55%	71%	81%	95%
Central AC	78%	87%	94%	98%
Reside in homes >2,000 sq. ft.	15%	26%	34%	38%
College degree or higher	39%	38%	72%	61%
Annual household income \$50K+	45%	53%	69%	84%
Average age	54	51	47	47
	n=136	n=302	n=44	n=1,490

Attitudinal Characteristics of Thermostat Owners

- Smart thermostat owners are...
 - much more tech-savvy than manual or programmable thermostat owners
 - slightly more concerned with managing energy use than owners of manual thermostats
- Retail Products Initiative participants' tech savviness score is higher than that of the general population of smart thermostat owners

	Summer .	• 50 * 12°	72°F	72°f
			(General Population)	(Participants)
Tech savviness score (1=low, 7=high)*	3.30	3.41	4.01	4.50
Engagement in Energy Use				
Not concerned	25%	20%	13%	12%
Idealists (engaged but not proactive)	31%	43%	50%	47%
Achievers (engaged and proactive)	44%	38%	37%	41%
	n=136	n=302	n=44	n=1,490





Customer Behaviors



Key Findings



- Comfort is the primary driver behind thermostat setpoints
- While many smart thermostat owners leverage programmed schedules and away/vacation functionalities of their devices, many continue using smart thermostats like they would use manual thermostats
- Furthermore, even when programmed, smart thermostat owners continually make manual adjustments to temperature settings on their devices

Key Drivers of Setpoint Behaviors

- Users of all thermostat types prioritize comfort followed by energy savings when selecting thermostat setpoints
- Retail Products Initiative participants, however, value a balance of comfort and energy use



Typical Temperature Control Behaviors

- Smart thermostat owners are more likely to program their thermostats on a schedule than to make manual adjustments or set their thermostat to a single temperature setting
- Still, approximately one-third continue to use their smart thermostat as a manual one, making manual adjustments or setting a single temperature for the season

	Summer	■ * 72°	72°	(72°)
Programmed temperature schedule	0%	27%	(General Population)	(Participants)
Manually adjusted temperature settings	65%	53%	27%	24%
Set a single temperature for the season	35%	20%	11%	8%
	(n=97)	(n=281)	(n=41)	(n=1,429)

Dvnamics

Participant Reasons for Not Using a Programmed Schedule



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Frequency of Thermostat Adjustments When Home

 Most customers make manual adjustments to thermostat settings, with about half doing so at least once a day and over two-thirds doing so at least once a week Most smart thermostat owners (89% of general population and 96% of participants) have adjusted temperature remotely. Of those, 47% do so at least a few times a week.

	Summer -	Solution Solution	72°F	72°f
Once a day or more	43%	33%	(General Population) 24%	(Participants) 36 %
Once to a few times a week	20%	25%	46%	33%
Several times a month	5%	6%	2%	10%
Several times over the season	15%	22%	18%	17%
Never	18%	14%	10%	4%
	(n=94)	(n=262)	(n=42)	(n=1,429)

Dpinion **Dynamics** Note: Asked of customers with central air conditioning systems

Use of Thermostats When Away or on Vacation

- While away or on vacation, less than half of smart thermostat owners use the away or vacation mode function
- Users of other types of thermostats make use of other energy-saving adjustments

	Summer .		72°F
Turned off air conditioning system	33%	19%	(General Population)
			200/
Set thermostat to higher temperature	58%	66%	38%
Set thermostat to away/vacation mode	9%	5%	41%
Left thermostat on usual setting	0%	10%	4%
	(n=79)	(n=217)	(n=33)

Opinion **Dynamics** Note: Asked of customers with central air conditioning systems



Customer Thermostat Preferences



Key Findings



- Most customers like the features of smart thermostats and would be willing to purchase one if they had to replace their thermostat
- Thermostats have long lifespans and do not require frequent replacement. Customers will need to be encouraged to replace their older functioning thermostats
- Customer preferences are relatively price *inelastic*. Thermostat control features, rather than price, drive thermostat preferences, suggesting that discounts and incentives may have less value in encouraging adoption
- The main barrier to customers purchasing smart thermostats appears to be motivating them to replace a working thermostat

Thermostat Attribute Relative Importance

- When shopping for a thermostat, customers prioritize control features followed by cost
- Energy savings is a lower priority



Atttribute Relative Importance Scores

¹ Includes both price and installation cost

² Captures whether thermostat is manual, programmable, or home sensing/learning

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Thermostat Attribute Relative Importance by Utility

- Ameren Illinois and ComEd customers show similar thermostat preferences
 - Ameren Illinois customers tend to be slightly more price sensitive
 - Ameren Illinois customers place slightly less emphasis on control features
- Ameren Illinois Retail Products Initiative participants are less cost-sensitive and place more emphasis on control features



Attribute Relative Importance Scores by Utility

¹ Includes both price and installation cost

² Captures whether thermostat is manual, programmable, or home sensing/learning

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Share of Preference Under Current Conditions

- If shopping for a new thermostat...
 - Nearly two-thirds of customers would select a smart thermostat
 - Fewer would select a programmable or manual thermostat
 - Nearly one-fifth would not choose one of the options available and keep their current thermostat





Share of Preference Under Different Price Scenarios

- Customer demand is relatively price inelastic
 - Discounting smart thermostats by \$100 increases their share of preference by 11 percentage points
 - A small and consistent share of customers will not purchase a thermostat or will select a manual thermostat regardless of smart thermostat price



Shares of Smart Thermostat Preference by Price Point





Customer Segmentation



Key Findings



- LCDC modeling identified five customer segments based on the thermostat purchase preferences
- Each segment places emphasis differently on the various thermostat attributes, calling for customized marketing, messaging, and intervention approaches
- Segments differ based on demographic characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors
- Customers who have purchased smart thermostats through the Retail Products Initiative fit a different customer profile compared to the general population of Ameren Illinois customers with many falling into the segment that is most appreciative of the technological features of smart thermostats

Customer Segmentation – Summary



Tech Devotees

- Tech-savvy early adopters with strong preference for advanced control features
- Most likely to already own a smart thermostat and to buy at full price

Design at All Costs

- Willing to spend any amount for name brand and modern design
- Most would buy smart thermostats regardless of price
- Tech-savvy

Tech-Appreciating Savings Seekers

- Interest in at least some programmability with appreciation for added tech
- Open and willing to purchase smart thermostats, especially as the prices drop
- Most energy-conscious

Biggest Bang for the Buck

- Looking for as many smart features as possible without overspending
- Exceptionally low motivation to purchase a new thermostat
- Most likely to own their home

Frugal Traditionalists

- Most price sensitive and the only customers to prefer manual
- Least likely to adopt smart thermostats
- None own a smart thermostat
- Disproportionately less educated and lower income



Customer Segmentation – Attribute Preferences

- LCDC model identified five customer segments with distinct patterns of preference
 - Four of the five segments care primarily about control features and prefer advanced controls



Attribute Relative Importance Scores by Segment

¹ Includes both price and installation cost

² Captures whether thermostat is manual, programmable, or home sensing/learning

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Customer Segmentation – Current Thermostat Ownership

- Customers in each segment can be characterized using other survey responses
- Demographic patterns could support targeted marketing to segments with certain preferences

	Tech Devotees n=76	Design at All Costs n=29	Tech-Appreciating Savings Seekers n=211	Biggest Bang for the Buck n=82	Frugal Traditionalists n=50
Summer .	5%	23%	30%	34%	68%
	71%	62%	64%	58%	32%
72°F	24%	15%	6%	8%	0%

Thermostats Currently Installed by Segment



Customer Segmentation – Price Sensitivity

- Price sensitivity varies across segments, but most segments are not highly price-motivated
- The most price sensitive is the one that prefers manual thermostats



Customer Segmentation – Demographics

 Customer segments differ across a range of sociodemographic characteristics, including age, education, income, and homeownership status

Tech-

Riggest

	Tech	Design at	Appreciating	Bang for the	Frugal	General
	Devotees	All Costs	Savings Seekers	Buck	Traditionalists	Population
Segment Size (Householders)	290,000	81,200	487,200	232,500	231,880	1,160,000
% of Population	25%	7%	42%	20%	7%	100%
Age Age <35	25%	42%	18%	16%	22%	21%
Age <35-54	40%	38%	36%	33%	31%	36%
Age 55+	35%	21%	46%	51%	46%	44%
Education HS or less	16%	23%	28%	20%	35%	25%
Some college	32%	48%	30%	42%	32%	34%
BA or higher	52%	28%	41%	38%	33%	41%
Employment Employed	77%	78%	64%	63%	55%	66%
Retired/Unemployed	23%	22%	36%	37%	45%	34%
Less than \$50k	41%	49%	52%	44%	58%	49%
\$50k-less than \$75k	24%	19%	22%	19%	22%	21%
\$75k or more	36%	32%	26%	37%	20%	30%
Home ownership	71%	61% n=82	67% n=211	76%	61% n=50	69% n=448

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Segment Targeting Considerations

Primary target

Secondary target



CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS



Conclusions: The Smart Thermostat Market

- Smart thermostat market share has increased dramatically over the past year, but smart thermostats only comprise 8% of all thermostats installed
- Customers who currently have smart thermostats fit the profile of early adopters
 - They are more tech-savvy, younger, more affluent, and have higher levels of educational attainment. They are also less concerned with managing their energy use
- The remaining market for smart thermostats is large an estimated 1.2 million customers have manual or programmable thermostats



Conclusions: Increasing Smart Thermostat Adoption

- Most customers like the features of smart thermostats and would be willing to purchase one if they had to replace their thermostat
- Thermostats have long lifespans and do not require frequent replacement. Customers will need to be encouraged to replace their older functioning thermostats
 - Thermostat control features, rather than price, drive thermostat preferences, suggesting that discounts and incentives may have less value in encouraging adoption
 - Different customer segments place differing emphasis on various thermostat attributes, calling for customized marketing, messaging, and intervention approaches
 - Thermostats are the latest tech gadget for the early adopters, but customers who aren't tech driven and have a working thermostat could be a more difficult sell
- HVAC upgrades are opportunities to increase customer demand but contractors are a barrier to smart thermostat adoption. Contractors are more likely to recommend and install programmable or manual thermostats than smart thermostats. Customers who select their own thermostats show a greater preference for smart thermostats
 - Contractor education is needed to increase adoption as part of HVAC upgrades



Conclusions: Thermostat Usage

- Users of all thermostat types prioritize convenience and comfort over saving energy when selecting thermostat setpoints
- Many smart thermostat owners ignore the automated smart features of their thermostat and use it like their old thermostat
 - Even those that make use of those features make frequent manual temperature adjustments
 - New smart thermostat owners could benefit from some education on how to use their thermostat to save energy without sacrificing comfort



DISCUSSION



ADDITIONAL RESULTS



Other Equipment Penetration



Other Equipment Penetration

Smart Strips

 While 93% of people own a power strip of some kind, only 8% own at least one smart strip.

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Air Purifiers

 Nearly a quarter of households have at least one air purifier



Ameren Illinois Program Awareness and Participation



Awareness of Utility Programs

- 70% of customers are aware of one or more Ameren Illinois energy efficiency programs
- Customers are most aware of Ameren Illinois's rebates on light bulbs (33%)
- A quarter (25%) are aware of smart thermostat rebates



Sources of Program Awareness

Bill inserts and mailers from utility are the most common sources of program awareness

Participation in Programs

- Overall, 7% of customers received a rebate from Ameren Illinois in the last year
- Smart thermostats were the most common product with 5% reporting purchasing a program-discounted thermostat
- Less than 1% purchased a program discounted smart strip
- 2% of customers report receiving rebates from Ameren Illinois for other products

SEGMENT PROFILES

Tech Devotees

- Tech-savvy early adopters
- More likely than any other segment to own smart thermostats
- Strong preference for advanced thermostat control features
- Willing to purchase smart thermostats at full price

Appearance

Cost

Control

Thermostat Attribute Relative Importance Scores 66

ENERGY

n=76

Savings

Voice

Occupancy

Design at All Costs

- Willing to spend any amount for name brand and modern design
- Place great importance on advanced control features
- Most would buy smart thermostats regardless of price
- Tech-savvy
- Younger and somewhat less educated

		Design at All Costs	General Population
Segment Size (Househ	olders)	74,470	1,160,000
% of Popu	ulation	7%	N/A
Age Ag	ge <35	41%	20%
Age <	35-54	38%	36%
Age <	ge 55+	21%	44%
Education HS	or less	24%	25%
Some	college	48%	34%
BA or	higher	28%	41%
Employment Em	ployed	78%	66%
Retired/Unem	ployed	22%	34%
Income Less than	1 \$50k	49%	49%
\$50k-less than	1 \$75k	19%	21%
\$75k o	r more	32%	30%
Home owr	nership	61%	69% n=448

Tech-Appreciating Savings Seekers

- Interest in at least some programmability with appreciation for advanced controls and features
- Open and willing to purchase smart thermostats, especially as prices drop
- Most energy conscious segment

Thermostat Attribute Relative Importance Scores

43

 Full Price
 Discounted by \$100
 Priced at \$25
 n=211

Biggest Bang for the Buck

- Looking for as many smart features as possible without overspending
- Least motivation of any segment to purchase a new thermostat

Biggest Bang

General

Most likely of all segments to own their home

Thermostat Attribute Relative Importance Scores

n=104

Full Price Discounted by \$100 Priced at \$25 ⁿ⁼⁸²

Frugal Traditionalists

- Most price-sensitive
- Prefer manual thermostats
- Least likely to adopt smart thermostats
- None currently own a smart thermostat
- Disproportionately less educated, lower income

		Traditionalists	Population
Segm	ent Size (Householders)	130,380	1,160,000
	% of Population	11%	N/A
Age	Age <35	23%	20%
	Age <35-54	31%	36%
	Age 55+	46%	44%
Education	HS or less	35%	25%
	Some college	32%	34%
	BA or higher	33%	41%
Employmer	nt Employed	55%	66%
	Retired/Unemployed	45%	34%
Income	Less than \$50k	58%	49%
	\$50k-less than \$75k	22%	21%
	\$75k or more	20%	30%
	Home ownership	61%	69%
		n=50	n=448

General

Frugal

APPENDIX

Share of Preference Simulations - Inputs

Attributes		Manual	Programmable	Ecobee Lite	Nest E	Ecobee 4	Nest Learning
Brand		Honeywell	Honeywell	Ecobee	Nest	Ecobee	Nest
Style				* 72	(75)	* 72 • ~ vodev	75
Cost*		\$25	\$50	\$170	\$170	\$250	\$250
	Programmable	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Thermostat Type	Home sensing	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Learning	No	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Remote acce	SS	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Occupancy se	ensing	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Voice comma	ind-enabled	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Energy saving	gs potential	Up to \$50 per year	Up to \$100 per year	Up to \$140 per year			
ENERGY STAF	R certified	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

* Includes both price and installation cost

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