

WATER & BEHAVIOUR CHANGE E-BULLETIN

From Waterwise in collaboration with Kathryn Rathouse Social Research, February 25, 2009

The purpose of this e-Bulletin is to share research and activities related to water and behaviour change. We hope that the e-Bulletin will be interactive; we ask that subscribers email us with news, announcements, events, requests for information, opportunities for collaboration and other information, which will include in future W&BC e-Bulletins. We hope to release about two e-Bulletins per month.

Important note

Please reply to this email if you would like to continue receiving W&BC e-Bulletins. Since this is the first issue, we have sent it to all of our contacts in order to spread the word as widely as possible. We will not email you another e-Bulletin unless you let us know (some of you already have - thanks!) that you would like to continue receiving future issues.

Alternative futures

DFID approached Futerra with a brief to raise awareness of the crucial role that access to clean water and good sanitation makes in our everyday lives and how we take this very much for granted. They wished to draw attention to their work on improving water and sanitation in the developing world and so Futerra, in partnership with SquintOpera, produced a series of striking images as part of a DFID exhibition and campaign to challenge and inform policy developers, decision makers and opinion formers. To see some of the images, go to <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/News/files/water-sanitation-policy-08.asp>.

Water diaries

Recent research suggests (unsurprisingly) that a diary filled in over the course of a week gives more accurate estimates of water use than asking people to recall their water use at the end of the week. Recall was prompted by asking respondents how often and with what quantities of water they carried out thirteen tasks. Perhaps more interesting is the finding that diary estimates and recall estimates were similar for personal washing and food preparation tasks but significantly different for tasks including clothes washing, dishwashing and other household chores. The abstract is available here: <http://fmx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/21/1/49?etoc>.

This research was carried out in Bolivia. If anyone knows of research along these lines from the UK, or research looking at how well estimates from diaries relate to measured water use (the \$64,000 question), please do let us know. We'll include responses in the next e-Bulletin.

Public understanding of sustainable water

Defra has commissioned Synovate to carry out some focus groups to explore aspirations, assumptions and expectations around sustainable water use in the home. The project is due to report shortly – we'll keep you informed. For more information go to <http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Complete=0&ProjectID=16190#Description>.

Will water supply limit tourism?

Under what circumstances could water supply become a limiting factor in the development of tourism on the tiny island of Herm, in the Channel Islands? An investigation in 2008 by tourism consultant Jackie Denman, as part of her MSc in Sustainable Development under the External Programme of the University of London, involved analysing recent records of daily water usage,

accommodation occupancy, boat arrivals, weather variables and borehole levels on the island, looking for patterns of association. 875 day visitors and 229 staying visitors were also involved in keeping a diary of their water use during their visit to the island. The findings broadly support the predicted model, including the fact that periods of low rainfall can be associated both with an increase in visitor numbers, and hence demand for water, and a coincidental reduction in water supply. Predicted climate change is likely to affect the time sequence of periods of below average rainfall with respect to the seasonal distribution of visitor numbers, which in turn will determine the timing, frequency and severity of water stress. Contact Jackie at jdenman@thetourismcompany.com for further information about this unpublished report.

Do educational initiatives save water?

Ofwat are currently developing water efficiency activity targets for water companies. Much debate is being had as to what quantities of water savings may be attributed to educational activities and other awareness raising engineering approaches. If anyone has any evidence, please email us; responses will be collated and sent around with the next e-Bulletin.

EcoTeams and Showerdrop timers

Global Action Plan are currently working with Thames Water to assess the effects of shower timers on behaviour. Showerdrops are being distributed to EcoTeam members who are then asked to fill in a before and after survey. Results will be available soon.

To include items in the next issue of the Water and Behaviour Change e-Bulletin or to be added to the email list, please email Joanne at jzygmunt@waterwise.org.uk or Kathryn at Kathryn@krsrc.co.uk.

Best wishes,
Joanne and Kathryn