Faculty and students team up for Earth Hour

Edmonton—A new website created by students and faculty members in the School of Business called myEarthHour.ca has the potential to impact the Earth Hour movement. On the last Saturday of March people across 120 countries have collectively turned off the lights for one hour. It’s a symbolic gesture designed to inspire action to combat climate-change, but assistant professor Leo Wong says it could be much more.

“Earth Hour is a good reason to talk about energy consumption, but energy savings in the city during that hour have been nominal in the past,” says Wong. “Motivating people to reduce their energy use is a marketing issue, one that we are using technology to address.” MyEarthHour.ca allows Edmontonians to join activities, collect points for completing those activities, and see how their results compare to others.

It’s a tool that also has potential on a global scale, Earth Hour organizer World Wildlife Fund (WWF) currently has an online tool listing events, but there isn’t a digital method for participants to track their own environmental behaviors.

The myEarthHour.ca website is easy to administer and could provide a good foundation for creating a tool that could be adopted on an international scale, one that all cities could use to manage their own campaigns. “Right now we’re focusing on building momentum and generating a solid group of users so we can demonstrate that this is something WWF may want to support,” added Wong.

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