StepGreen leverages online social networks to motivate behavior change.

Research Questions:
- What are the barriers and opportunities for online social networks to structurally support reduced energy consumption among their members?
- What types of motivation will be most effective?
- Will online social networks have a structural impact on green behavior (e.g., socializing people to the issue, distributing information)?

Site design
- System consists of a main site and visualization hosted on each individual’s personal profile page on MySpace.
- Actions can be explored in three ways:
  1. Action browser (front image) allows users to sort and explore actions.
  2. Suggestion actions are provided on main site and social network page (back image).
  3. Popular actions are shown in a tag cloud (front image).
- Flash visualization:
  - Present both on main site (front image) and social network site (back image).
  - Shows commitments & fulfillments of actions in terms of savings.
  - Weekly summaries and a projection give a high level overview.
- Future work will look at sensor-based reporting and other technologies for delivery as well as an expanded set of social networks.

Initial studies
- Surveyed 122 people through Craigslist.
- Each rated actions in terms of how likely they were to do them on a scale of 1 (definitely would not do) to 5 (already do).
- While some actions were popular, people were reluctant to take many simple actions (carpooling, air drying clothes).
- Likelihood to take actions were correlated across the board with certain demographic characteristics (e.g., women said they were more likely; white Americans said they were less likely than average).
- We also conducted a card sorting task to identify how people grouped these actions (e.g., in terms of domain such as laundry, in terms of cost, in terms of benefit to environment). Results suggested a wide diversity of categorizations.

Field deployment
- We deployed the site to 32 participants with active MySpace accounts.
- They saw 57 different actions over a 3 week period.
- Filed out online surveys before and after the study on their environmental attitudes, decision-making styles, demographics.

Results
- Participants found the site easy to use, on the whole.
- Appreciated personal feedback on the effects of their actions.
- Actions people committed to were correlated with those rated highly in the previous surveys.
- But actions committed to and fulfilled were generally those with lesser impact on the environment.