Effectiveness of awareness campaigns in shifting practices to reduce household food waste

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63% of household food waste in Canada could have been eaten\(^1\)

1. *Food Waste in the Home*, Love Food Hate Waste Canada, 2017
Do awareness campaigns change practices at home?
A Simple Campaign Design
Testing Engagement Strategies

- Information Only
- Information + Workshops
- Information + Online Game

+ Control (no campaign)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Recruitment and Pre-Survey</th>
<th>Engagement (12 Weeks)</th>
<th>Post-Survey</th>
<th>Focus Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>n=120</td>
<td>No engagement</td>
<td>n=70</td>
<td>n=0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Only</td>
<td>n=140</td>
<td>4 newsletters</td>
<td>n=64</td>
<td>n=13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information + Workshop</td>
<td>n=120</td>
<td>4 newsletters + 4 workshops</td>
<td>n=56</td>
<td>n=11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information + Online Game</td>
<td>n=122</td>
<td>4 newsletters + 12 online game levels</td>
<td>n=74</td>
<td>n=20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Practices Generally Stayed the Same

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Meal Planning</th>
<th>Management of Leftovers</th>
<th>Management of Food Past Best Before Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>↑ Shopping lists (p=0.01)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Only</td>
<td>↓ Unplanned purchases (p=0.01)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information + Workshop</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>↑ Eat anyway (p=0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information + Online Game</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>↓ Thrown away (p=0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>↑ Check if still good (p=0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>↑ Eat anyway (p=0.04)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Last week the pineapple was 1 dollar and I bought six of them. I know that my grandchildren would eat them but I didn’t need to buy that much, but it was on sale, so I bought them.” - Tanya

“We always make enough for a family of 4 but we are just two people. When I try to save the rice in a container it just dries out and it’s gross, so we just throw it away.” - Ashley
A Missing Piece of Traditional Campaigns

Motivation

Opportunity

Ability

Food waste causes problems for the climate and our wallets!

When food ends up in landfill it creates Methane, a greenhouse gas 20 times more dangerous than CO2!

In Canada, nearly 1/2 of the food wasted comes from our own kitchens costing us over $1500 each year in food we never eat!

Together we can tackle food waste, eat well, save money, and save the planet!
A Closer Look at Online Game Participants

Gender, age, education, income, household size did not appear to affect participation.

Households without children engaged with the online game more than those with children (p=0.04).
Gamification: A Promising Engagement Strategy?

“It's quick, it doesn't take much of your time at all but it is very engaging. Whereas like, you know, maybe a group where you have to go out to the group sometimes even if you think, oh, I'm going to do that on Tuesday and whatever, it's kind of easy for something to come up and get in the way......but this [game] is easy to put into anyone's schedule just because it takes such a short amount of time and it was very engaging. And then yeah, once you start doing it, it does make you think about things more than you think.” -Susan
Thank you!

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