

**Customer Name:**

Avista Utilities

**Utility Type:**

Investor-Owned Gas and Electric

**Deployed:**Aclara ENERGYprism®  
Customer Care Solution**Service Territory:**

Over 485,000 customers in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho

## Avista Saves \$400,000 with Web Site Upgrades

### Problem

The utility's web site needed updating, and managers wanted to add self-service functionality to support online transactions. Before funding the project, which came with a hefty price tag, senior management looked for an ROI of 11 percent or more.

### Solution

A cross-departmental team developed a business case that showed transactional web capabilities, combined with information-rich content, would shift calls from the contact center to the company web site. Along with hiring a firm to create the new design and manage the programming, Avista added two customer-focused modules of the Aclara ENERGYprism® suite: Bill Analysis and Energy Analysis.

Bill Analysis is designed to help consumers understand their utility bills and answer common billing questions. Energy Analysis allows consumers to input details about their households and gain practical, customized recommendations for managing energy use. Multiple levels of customization in Energy Analysis allow customers to probe deeply, and personalization lets consumers return to the site at their convenience to explore more ways to save energy.

### Results

Adding transactional capabilities to the company web site allowed Avista to divert 10 percent of calls from the call center to online self-help tools, saving nearly \$400,000 annually. Today, managers at the utility estimate that 133,000 calls per year are resolved through the web site rather than on the phone with a customer service agent.

In 2009, 87,000 customers looked into their bills online, and 63,000 of them used the bill analysis tool. This translated into 7,000 fewer billing questions and high-bill inquiries coming into the contact center. Customers found their answers through the Bill Analysis tool.

	Selected bill:	Last mo
	12/31/2009	12/01/09
Total Electric:	\$61.74	\$
Total Gas:	\$132.72	\$
Total Electric and Gas Charges:	\$194.46	\$1
Comfort Level Billing (CLB) Amount Billed:	\$154.00	\$1
<b>Total Bill:</b>	<b>\$154.00</b>	<b>\$1</b>

These are the top-level items on this bill compared with a previous bill. The Bill Impact column item contributed to the difference between the two bills. Click any item with a "?" to learn more.

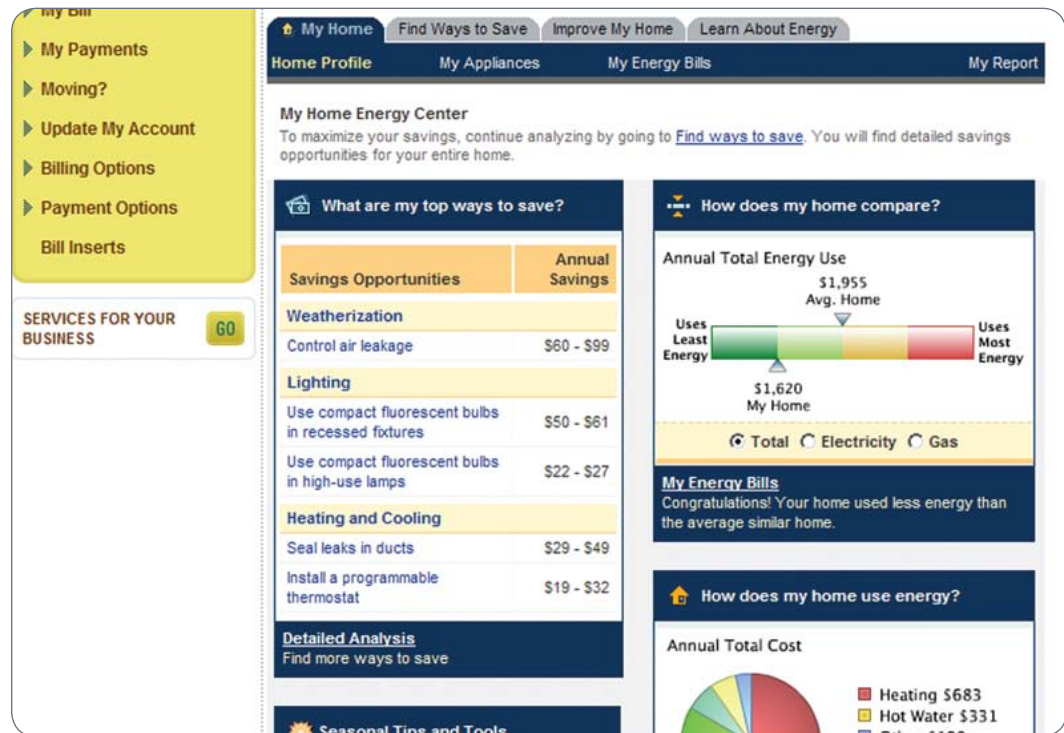
*Avista's web site allows customers to compare bills for gas and electric services.*

**"Your new web site is just great. I enjoy every feature of it, especially the opportunity to analyze energy consumption."**

*—Avista Utilities Customer*

Nearly 17,000 of Avista’s residential users took the time to explore their household energy use with Aclara’s Energy Analysis tool in 2009, and 62 percent of those customers filled out personalized home profiles. Of those 44 percent also filled out an appliances inventory, and, 27 percent of those customers returned to the energy analyzer multiple times.

Improvements in customer-satisfaction scores prove that consumers like having this type of information available, and providing it gave the utility’s brand a boost. In fact, Avista’s site was ranked North America’s top electric and natural gas utility web site in 2009, according to a benchmarking study performed by analysts at the Colorado-based research firm called E Source.



*Avista’s web site allows consumers to analyze their electric and gas usage, providing insights into how to reduce costs.*

### About Avista

Founded in 1889, Avista Corporation is an energy company involved in the production, transmission, and distribution of energy as well as other energy-related businesses. Avista Utilities, the operating division of Avista Corporation, serves over 485,000 customers and provides electric service to 356,000 homes and business as well as natural gas service to 316,000 homes and business in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

Avista serves its customers with a mix of hydro, natural gas, coal, contract, and wind power delivered over 2,100 miles of transmission line, 17,000 miles of distribution line and 6,100 miles of natural gas distribution mains.

With annual revenues of more than \$1.3 billion, Avista is an investor-owned utility that trades on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE:AVA). It is headquartered in Spokane, Washington.