



(Research on Lifestyles, Values and Environment)
UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XH

FORTHCOMING SEMINAR

Monday 7 December, 2009, 1300-1400

45b AZ 04
University of Surrey

**Ruth Rettie and Kevin Burchell
Kingston University**

CHARM: Applying the Social Norm Approach to Sustainability Practices

The social practices approach suggests that unsustainable consumption and behaviour is embedded within everyday, taken-for-granted practices. The social norm approach – which has recently been employed in the US in sustainability contexts, such as recycling, forest conservation and energy consumption – tells us that people are influenced by their understandings of what other people do. More specifically, their behaviour tends to conform towards social norms. CHARM – a three-year project, funded by the EPSRC – draws upon thinking and research in sociology, social psychology, behavioural economics and social marketing. Employing digital technologies in innovative ways, CHARM focuses on three case studies: 1) electricity consumption, 2) active lifestyles and 3) Facebook, each of which explores the potential role of digital technology in shaping sustainable practices. CHARM aims to understand the taken-for-granted conceptions that underlie normal practices, their susceptibility to revision, the ways in which they are informed and contested by individual and social group feedback, and the potential role of digital technology in shaping 'normal' practices.

Enquiries to Gemma Cook, RESOLVE Co-ordinator, 01483 686689

