

3 new attempts to get home energy management right

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We've seen the home energy management space move up, down and sideways with new players piling on, big names including Microsoft, Google and Cisco bowing out, and partnerships and mergers changing the game one way or another. And the fluidity continues, as the three concepts highlighted below demonstrate.

Smarter energy cloud – This is a piece of Dubuque, Iowa's Smarter Electricity Pilot Study involving 1,000 volunteer households with smart meters. The overall goal is to demonstrate how informed and engaged electricity consumers can save money and conserve energy and in doing so make their community more sustainable. For the smarter energy cloud piece of it, IBM built the IBM Smarter City Sustainability Model, which is an Internet or cloud-based asset that, according to IBM, "provides a combination of deep analytics to generate personalized insights, social computing to allow volunteers to collaborate, and actionable intelligence that allows citizens interested in changing consumption patterns to understand the impact of their actions. This last aspect makes it a very powerful system to reinforce changes and sustain them in future." [Read more about the smarter energy cloud >>](#)

Real-time, whole-home and appliance-level energy monitoring – Blue Line Innovations, which makes the PowerCost Monitor, has partnered with PlotWatt, the maker of the PlotWatt Energy Dashboard, to beef up home energy reporting. The idea is that with no additional hardware or subscription fee, users of the PowerCost Monitor can now see whole-home and appliance-level energy usage on a dashboard that also shows the home's energy cost breakdown and makes tailored recommendations and alerts for reducing those costs. That's possible because PlotWatt's patent-pending algorithms can identify appliance-specific data signatures from a whole-house meter, and report the appliance-level costs to the homeowner. PlotWatt receives live data feeds every 32 seconds from the PowerCost Monitor™ WiFi Gateway bundle that is available from [Amazon.com](#) (\$149.95) and other retailers. And the companies say they have also built in more choice and a more robust offering for those who were using Microsoft Hohm or Google PowerMeter, both of which are being discontinued. [Read more about the PowerCost Monitor and PlotWatt >>](#)



Eco-fade Sustainable PhotoFrame -- From Earth Techling comes this story about a London designer who has combined the nostalgia of family photos into a home energy management concept that displays home energy usage along with photos on a wall screen about the size of a smallish television. Apparently inspired by Phillips, the product features a large, digitally displayed family photo that acts as the control interface for a system that monitors the electricity use of each room in a household. [Read more about the Eco-fade Sustainable PhotoFrame>>](#)

Of the three approaches, which one do you think has the most potential? Use the Talk Back form below to add your comments.