

Microsoft Hohm outs home energy hogs

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By Joab Jackson

[Microsoft](#) has expanded its Hohm energy monitoring portal so home owners can see, directly from their personal computers, how much power their homes use.

The Hohm service can now ingest data from a wireless energy tracking device offered by Blue Line Innovations, called PowerCost Monitor, Microsoft announced Tuesday. The combined offering graphs energy usage within a household, showing an up-to-the-minute longitudinal summary of how much energy is being consumed.

In a blog [entry](#) on the Hohm site, Microsoft Hohm general manager Troy Batterberry, said this partnership with Blue Line is another step in Microsoft's plan to create an entire home-based "ecosystem" of energy-aware appliances and devices, such as light bulbs, smart appliances and [electric cars](#).

"We see a future where -- through Hohm -- all of these things can work together seamlessly to provide everyone with convenient tools to understand, manage and reduce their energy use," he wrote

The PowerCost [Monitor](#) is a device that can be [attached](#) to the home's electric meter that reads the meter's display of how much power has been consumed. A wireless device uploads data to a personal computer, which in turn, relays the data to the Hohm portal where it can be aggregated and analyzed.

By watching for spikes in usage while keeping track of what appliances are used when these spikes happen, consumers can better understand which appliances use the most power.

In the blog post, Batterberry showed on a graph the dramatic effect that an air conditioner can have on hourly power usage. "Obviously, this won't mean the end of air conditioners, but we do think it will raise people's awareness about how much energy their appliances are using and make smarter decisions accordingly," Batterberry said.

[Hohm](#), a beta service, analyzes home energy usage, based on information provided by the user. The company is also [planning](#) to work with utility companies to have energy usage information uploaded directly to Hohm, if requested by the user. The company claims its analysis can help users save money by giving them more insight into how they use energy.

The beta service is free to use, but only available in the U.S., a Microsoft spokeswoman confirmed. The PowerCost Monitor retails for US\$268.