
Power Hacks

By [Robb Miller](#) | Published: August 4, 2011

Taking Control of your Power

If you want to take control of your power, the first thing you need to do is get access to your own real-time energy consumption data. (Preferably on your smartphone or at least through a web-service). Don't worry we'll walk you through the process, no matter where you live, nor which Utility services you.

Check out our [cheesy video](#) starring [Carson Riley](#).

First, determine whether you have a SmartMeter™. (Just take a look at your meter, it will say "SmartMeter" or have a digital read-out). Many utilities are rolling them out right now. Check your Utility's Smart Grid plans [here](#).

If you have a SmartMeter (and your Utility has turned it on)

If you have a SmartMeter™, and your Utility has turned it on, you may be able to get near real-time data right from your Utility. (Check their website, search for SmartMeter). Unfortunately, most Utilities are not yet providing access to the real-time data– normally its an hour delayed, or perhaps even a day delayed. (Check out our previous post about this [here](#)).



If your data is delayed (at all), you will still need to hack your own real-time consumption data (don't worry, its totally legal. After all, its **your** data.) (In fact the California Public Utilities Commission has [mandated](#) California utilities to provide this data to consumers, and their trusted 3rd parties). We recommend getting the [RAVE](#)n from [Rainforest Automation](#) (You

may need to provision it for your specific SmartMeter™ with your Utility, but we can help with this). Essentially, the RAVen grabs the data from the SmartMeter™, and then you can use a webservice (discussed below) to track it, view it, parse it, etc.

No SmartMeter?

If you don't have a SmartMeter™ (yet), you still have several options to get real-time data to your mobile device or web-service. We review several of them in our video below. You can get them all at energymonitors.com, or at energycircle.com.

- 1) [TED 5000](#) (\$199 – the 'Industry Standard' for several years)
- 2) [BlueLine PowerCost Monitor](#) (\$99 + \$139 for the WIFI connection)
- 3) [Wattvision](#) (\$249 WIFI enabled.)
- 4) [eMonitor](#) (roughly \$1000, and a little more complex, but granular 'plug-level' data)

In each case, you will need an online service to track your usage. We suggest you use our friends at [Plotwatt](#). (Setting up an account is easy, and their User Interface is informative and fun). Wattvision and eMonitor do have their own online interface as well.

Once you have your data online, you are ready to take the next step: finding the right rate plan. Stay tuned, we will blog on this next week. (Also, check out whatsmypower.com for Time of Use or TOU plans in your area).

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plBhdvfV8tA&feature=player_embedded