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Microsoft Hohm Gadget: Energy Management Web Tool

Microsoft pairs up with Blue Line and launches the first gadget for Hohm

Google has been all words about its new online energy management [software](#) tool the Power manager but the company has not really come up with anything to show while on the other hand [Microsoft](#) has been quietly toiling with its own energy management software and is ready with the same. The company has reportedly finalized a deal with Blue Line Innovations, a Canadian company that sells low cost energy management gadgets.

Blue Line Innovations was founded back in 2003, and has over 130,000 PowerCost Monitor's in the field today mostly through utility installations. Blue Line CEO Peter Porteous says customers that already have the PowerCost Monitor need to buy the Hohm-compatible Wi-Fi gateway to plug into Hohm.



Here's how Hohm's basic level works: Consumers can log into the Hohm site (www.microsoft-hohm.com), and start off by entering just their Windows Live ID and their zip code. Using this simple location information Hohm uses algorithms licensed from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the Department of Energy to start predicting home energy consumption. From there users can enter as much info as they want (answering up to 180 questions) about home size, water heater brand, etc., to make the energy prediction of their home as accurate as possible.

The collaboration between Microsoft and Blue Line has produced the first **Hohm-compatible energy device**, in the form of a Wi-Fi gateway that can connect Blue Line's energy dashboard and meter sensor to Microsoft's Hohm service. Blue Line has been selling its "PowerCost Monitor" — which includes the sensor and radio device for the meter as well as a separate display — for \$99 at big box retailers like Fry's since the beginning of the year. The Hohm-compatible PowerCost Monitor and Wi-Fi kit will cost \$249 and will be available starting on Tuesday .

Microsoft chose the Blue Line device as its first **Hohm gadget** as the device is exceptionally easy to install and also has Compared to some energy management devices and sensors that have to be installed on a circuit by an electrician, the PowerCost Monitor can be clipped onto the meter, the dashboard can be plugged in and the gateway can be connected to your home Internet connection.

As soon as that simple set-up is complete, consumers can see how much energy they are consuming every 30 seconds on their PC or mobile device (see our [review](#) of the new product here). When you turn on your air conditioning, for example, the graph shoots up. Since the energy isn't appliance-specific (at this point) and is shown as one lump energy sum, you basically have to guess which spikes correlate with your energy consumption habits. Batterberry tells me he expects that Hohm will be compatible with other devices like smart plugs and smart thermostats shortly.

It still remains to be seen how the sales of the Hohm powered Wifi gateway hold up but one thing is for sure seeing the soaring energy rates this software will prove to be a great help to many people.