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Microsoft Talks Energy Efficiency & Hohm

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[Home energy management tools](#) are designed to help you make intelligent decisions about how you use energy in your living environment. These types of systems, typically through some type of manual or automated data collection of your energy usage patterns, make recommendations and suggestions on areas in which you can become more energy efficient, such as where you can cut down on power consumption around the house or make use of more efficient appliances.

One of the current larger players in the developing home energy management market is Microsoft who, through its innovative [Hohm online energy management tool](#), is helping informed consumers make better decisions about their energy usage patterns. [We've covered Hohm several times already](#), but to learn more about what it might have to offer you we turned to Brian Schultz, Business Development & Strategy for Microsoft Hohm, to get some quick answers. Note that this answers have been edited for clarity.



image via Microsoft

EarthTechling (ET): What exactly is the Microsoft Hohm service?

Brian Schultz: Microsoft Hohm is a free online platform that helps consumers save energy and money. With Hohm users can better understand their home energy usage, get personalized recommendations to conserve energy and start saving. It uses advanced analytics licensed from Lawrence Berkeley Labs and the U.S. Department of Energy to give users personalized energy saving recommendations. These recommendations are tailored based on users' specific household circumstances including home attributes and use of appliances and systems. Users can also compare their energy usage with that of others in the area.

Microsoft Hohm also helps utilities better serve their customers by giving insight into their energy consumption, allowing them to make more informed decisions to help them save energy and money.

ET: What makes Hohm stand out from similar online energy management systems?

Schultz: Hohm offers both detailed information about current home energy use (down to the minute and dollar with [Blue Line's PowerCost Monitor](#)) and personalized recommendations on ways to conserve via publicly available information like real estate records, weather patterns and algorithms licensed from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the Department of Energy. The great thing about Hohm is that it allows any consumer to begin their journey regardless of their starting point or requiring fancy equipment – they can do as little as entering their address on the Hohm website or as much as tracking their real time energy use – it's up to them how much effort they'd like to invest.

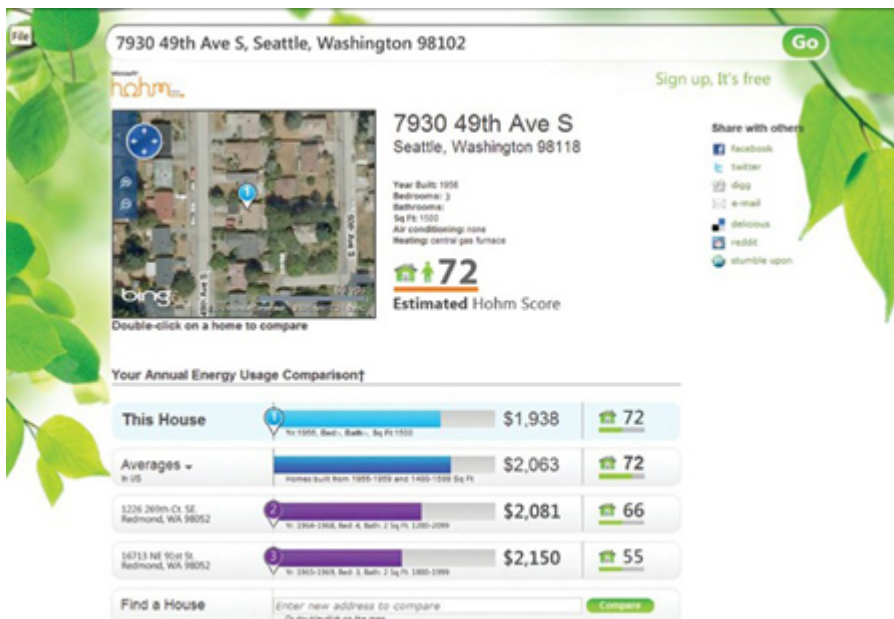


image via Microsoft

ET: What is the value of consumers using energy management systems like Hohm?

Schultz: Tools like Hohm are helping consumers become better informed about their energy use. Before these tools emerged, consumers had little insight in to how simple actions like turning off the lights, powering down electronics and changing water heater settings, impact their household. This real-time feedback ultimately makes it easier to reduce energy bills. Studies have confirmed the effectiveness of energy management tools in helping consumers reduce their energy consumption by up to 15% on monthly bills.

ET: How has Hohm been received by users since it was launched?

Schultz: We have been very pleased with the response from our users. We have [a very active online community](#) where users can share energy saving tips and tricks with each other and provide the Hohm team with feedback on ways to enhance the site moving forward. Our partnership with device maker Blue Line Innovations earlier this year was a result of user feedback – consumers wanted the option to monitor their real time home energy use.



image via Microsoft

ET: Of late we've seen mention of Hohm tie ins to [energy monitoring hardware](#) and [electric vehicles](#). Can you talk a little more about how this fits into this product's strategy?

Schultz: We've delivered on stage one of our roadmap which included helping consumers answer the following three questions:

- Where is my energy going?
- How do I compare to others? (Hohm Scores)
- What can I do in my specific situation?

We're now moving to the 2nd stage of our roadmap, which includes connecting Hohm to an ecosystem of devices and enabling automated control. As part of this strategy, you'll see Hohm begin to integrate with smart plugs, connected thermostats, and as you mentioned, electric vehicles. Ultimately, we want to consumers to be able to use Hohm to manage all of these home energy components in a seamless and automated way.