

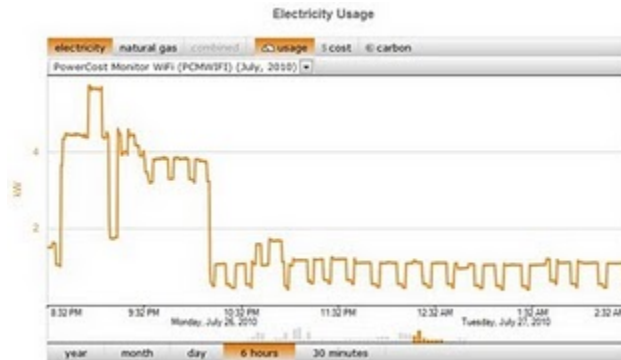
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Microsoft Hohm's First Gadget



Here at the Power Smart Pricing Blog as well as through the office phone lines, we get a lot of questions about energy monitoring devices. In the past, CNT Energy offered its participants the Price Light. Despite some of their technological shortcomings (like signal strength), the Price Light was able to help people save money simply by changing color. Now some big names in technology with deep pockets have begun developing new devices, software and partnerships ushering in the next era in home energy monitoring.

The most recent unveiling belongs to Microsoft with their gadget partner Blue Line Innovations. The gadget bundle includes a sensor, in home monitor and WiFi Gateway. It allows you to view your home's energy usage in near real-time on the monitor and the data is compatible with the Microsoft Hohm website.



Early reviews from around the Internet have said that installation is easy. Earth2Tech blogger Kevin Tofel says that "Installing the sensor took me about 15 minutes and was quite simple using the included instructions." At Engadget, a popular gadget and technology blog, they wrote that "Installation is easy -- well, relatively easy at least, compared to the circuit breaker dissection required when we tested out the TED 5000 last

year. Unlike then we never felt that our life was at risk, nor did we consider spending the money to call an electrician."

So now that you know its easy... you know about Microsoft Hohm, the real questions on everyone's mind are "How much is it?" and "Does it work with Day-Ahead pricing?"

The entire bundles costs \$250 and if you already have wireless Internet set up your home it will be compatible out-of-the-box. This is pretty fair price, and an argument can be made that this device will save you some money and pay you back for the initial cost. Also, if you haven't toured Microsoft Hohm's website, its goal is to give you personalized energy efficiency and conservation tips based on home's profile and energy usage. Overall, a great package deal. You can even buy it right now!

The one bit a caution with the product is that I am not convinced it will work with hourly pricing. It is compatible with a Time-of-Use rates that change a couple times a day, but there is no indication that it can handle something more complicated. The information like real-time energy usage will still be very useful, but it may not be able to We would love to get a report back from anyone who tries it.