

Comcast enters smart thermostat game

March 6 2012, By Matt Hickman

Big news in the world of energy-saving home automation:

Love 'em or hate 'em, omnipresent cable goliath Comcast has partnered with the [energy management](#) wizards over at Silicon Valley-based startup EcoFactor to bring automated home energy savings to customers of Xfinity Home, Comcast's new-ish broadband- and cloud-based home security/surveillance system.

EcoFactor's proprietary [energy management software](#) allows a household's thermostat to get "smart" by learning a homeowners heating and cooling patterns, preferences and peccadilloes. Along with this, an EcoFactor communicating thermostat automatically adjusts a home's temperature based on [weather patterns](#) and the home's thermal characteristics - essentially the software enables a thermostat to go on autopilot (although user's can manually override the settings if they see fit). Some explanatory tech babble: "Our patented system collects and analyzes many thousands of individual readings for each connected thermostat every day of the year. Our algorithms then identify each home's thermal characteristic and automatically adapt to occupant behavior and weather patterns. Using this vast amount of data, EcoFactor then creates and implements unique evolving strategies for each thermostat."

It's all somewhat similar to the Nest Thermostat (www.nest.com) but without the nifty hardware component and, of course, the aim is to decrease to optimize [energy usage](#) and decrease the customer's utility bills without sacrificing comfort. No connection to a [smart meter](#) is

needed as the system is designed simply to "unleash the hidden power of the humble [thermostat](#)." EcoFactor anticipates that users can reduce heating and cooling costs anywhere from 10 to 30 percent by using the system.

It's unclear as to when exactly EcoFactor will become available to Xfinity Home users.

Says Mitch Bowling, senior VP and general manager of new businesses for Comcast Cable in a statement: "Through our Xfinity Home service, we've created a broadband and cloud-based platform for security, remote home control and energy management and we're always looking to collaborate with innovative companies like EcoFactor. With EcoFactor, we see an opportunity to bring new and exciting technologies to our customers through an automatic energy management solution that works in real-time."

More information: Check out the full official release detailing the partnership (www.marketwatch.com/story/comcast-enters-smart-thermostat-game-2012-02-28).

Head on over to EcoFactor (www.ecofactor.com/what-is-ecofactor.php) to learn more about the company's services.

And if you're still a bit confused as to how this all works, it's certainly worth checking out the video:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=X90-wlgp05Q

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