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## Ampeer energy monitor tells you exactly how much power you're wasting

But do you really want to know?

by **Hardleigh Hewmann** - June 4 2014, 6:00 am PDT

With worldwide energy demand continuing to rise but the promise of renewable energy still somewhere just over the horizon, reducing personal energy consumption remains a goal to which many of the more noble-minded among us remain committed. Yes, it's fun buying all the latest shiny new hardware, but have you stopped to think about where all that electricity is coming from? In 2012, the United States generated a total of 4,054 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity, yet according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, [only 12%](#) of that came from renewable sources like hydropower, biomass, geothermal, solar, and wind. And while your energy bill tells you how many total kilowatt-hours you consumed for the month, it doesn't tell you how much of that went to air conditioning, heating, or your roommate's 60" plasma TV.

Until now. Los Angeles startup Ampeer, founded by 23-year-old Stanford dropout Gus Coulome, hopes to change that with its new \$299 personal energy monitor. It consists of two parts: a small, 4-inch-wide by 1½-inch-tall black cylinder made of polished ABS plastic (a yellow lightning bolt on the side glows when it's plugged in and flashes when it can't connect to the Internet) and a smartphone interface, with apps for iOS and Android. The base unit communicates via ZigBee with devices that can self-report their power consumption. For older devices without this capability, the company also sells remote sensors—pass-throughs that you connect between your device and a power outlet—for \$29 apiece, or \$99 for a pack of four.

The Ampeer base unit has no display or controls of its own—it is designed to be controlled solely through a mobile device. Once up and running, it displays retail-time energy use of all connected devices. Users can view the data in a number of ways—a list of devices and appliances organized by room, a pie chart showing percentages of current electricity use, total monthly consumption by device, and more.

Ampeer also allows users to display their household energy consumption on the "AmpeerGraph," a Google Maps overlay that Ampeer publishes on its website and

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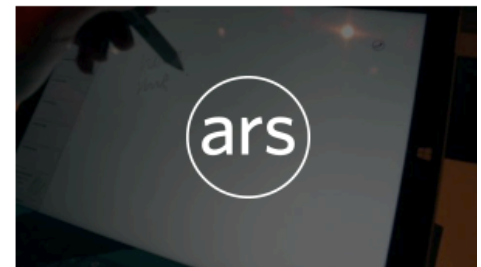


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shares with the users' energy companies. "This is all about 'collaborative saving,'" Coulome told us. "Unplugging my phone charger when I'm not using it isn't going to make a measureable difference in terms of saving the planet. But if all of us did that, you'd be surprised at how much electricity we'd save together. We want users to share how much they're saving with the rest of the country and the rest of the world. This is the only way we're going to reduce our electricity use. It's like [Google chairman] Eric Schmidt said, if you don't want people to know, maybe you shouldn't be doing it. If you don't want people to know how much electricity you're using, maybe you're wasting it."

The demo unit that we tested was impressive, doing exactly what Ampeer advertises. While we did not have any Ampeer-compliant devices available on hand, we tested the device with a dozen of the remote sensors, and it worked more or less as expected. We did encounter some glitches where devices currently in use would intermittently jump in and out of the display. Coulome assured us this would be fixed shortly with a software update.

The company is optimistic about sales. "What's hot right now? Big Data. The Internet of Things. Collaboration and sharing. Ampeer ticks all the boxes."



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