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# Nest thermostat now helps users avoid peak electricity rates

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Technology / Gadgets  
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Now that summer is officially upon us, it's likely that your air conditioning has begun running a lot more frequently. There are lots of ideas for **how to stay cool** without racking up a crazy energy bill, but the Nest Learning Thermostat now has new features that make cost-cutting decisions for you.

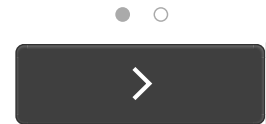
The smart thermostat has been **helping users to save energy** and cut costs since it was first released, but as utilities start to look into ways to lower demand during peak energy use times, Nest is rolling out features that help both consumers and utilities find the right balance.

In **a blog post** this week, Nest explained that every energy company has different strategies for how they incentivize off-peak energy use. Some utilities offer incentives

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for using less energy, while others have different pricing for different times of day where energy consumed during peak hours is more expensive. Those are called Time of Use plans.

Nest has unveiled a new program called Time of Savings where customers of utility companies using Time of Use plans can sign up to have their electricity rates shared with Nest. The user's thermostat will then try to use less electricity when it's more expensive by running preferred cooling or heating cycles strategically outside of those times.

Nest says, "So if your thermostat sees that you like to cool things down at noon, but that's when electricity prices spike, it might start cooling the house at 11:30 when energy's still cheap. Or it can slightly adjust the temperature when you're in peak pricing periods - never more than a degree or two - so you can save some cash while staying comfortable."

While this program helps consumers stay comfortable while avoiding hefty energy bills, it also helps utilities cut down their peak energy demand loads. When energy demand spikes at certain points of the day, energy companies often have to utilize back-up coal-fired power plants to help meet demand, which increases carbon emissions. Smart home and smart grid technologies can help balance the energy demand throughout the day so that back-up power plants don't need to be used.

Right now Nest is launching the Time of Savings program with SolarCity customers while Southern California Edison and other major energy companies are coming soon.

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**Blue\_Oak** · 2 months ago

Don't see a need to have yet another data intrusion.

Our plan has three rates and they apply every day year round except for weekends. Not that difficult to program the thermostat accordingly.

And for those peak days when the rate is punitive, that's what the remote web over-ride is for.

For interest, our aprpx rates:

Weekdays:

7am-3pm - 8 cents/kWh

3pm-7pm - 14 cents

7pm-11pm - 8 cents

11pm-7am - 4 cents

Horan's wonderful ...



by **Melissa Breyer** in Animals

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11pm-7am - 4 cents

All weekend:

11pm Fri - 7am Mon - 4 cents.

"Peak" days, announced 24 hrs in advance, up to 20/year: (8-12 typical)  
3pm-7pm - 95 cents/kWh! Yes punitively painful.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**Blue\_Oak** → Blue\_Oak · 2 months ago

And Nest is owned by Google. We already live too much in the Google world. They don't need any more of our life style data.

Go with a Honeywell or Ecobee thermostat instead.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**Blue\_Oak** → Blue\_Oak · 2 months ago

Unless you're one of those folks who leaves the Microwave clock flashing whatever time.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



**GCO** → Blue\_Oak · 2 months ago

For those people, a "smart" thermostat will be a disaster. It not only requires being connected to a wifi network, but also regular user input and corrections, at least during the first week, to "learn".

I suspect that non-technical people will be unaware of that step and skip it, and later jack the temperature way up/down at irregular times (e.g. middle of the night if it's ever too cold/hot then), to eventually achieve a constant "always cool" in summer, "always hot" in winter, just like a dumb thermostat would have...

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**GCO** · 2 months ago

back-up coal-fired power plants

Hyperbole fail. Unusually-high demand is typically filled with natural gas peakers and hydro.

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**Ian Watson** · 2 months ago

I'm not sure why they need to have a specific relationship with my electricity supplier. I mean, I guess some of them might have complicated TOU schedules that change over time, but, for example, my utility has a very simple structure with three different seasons and only two or three rates in one day. Why not let me program them in myself so I don't need to wait for them to partner with my utility?

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