

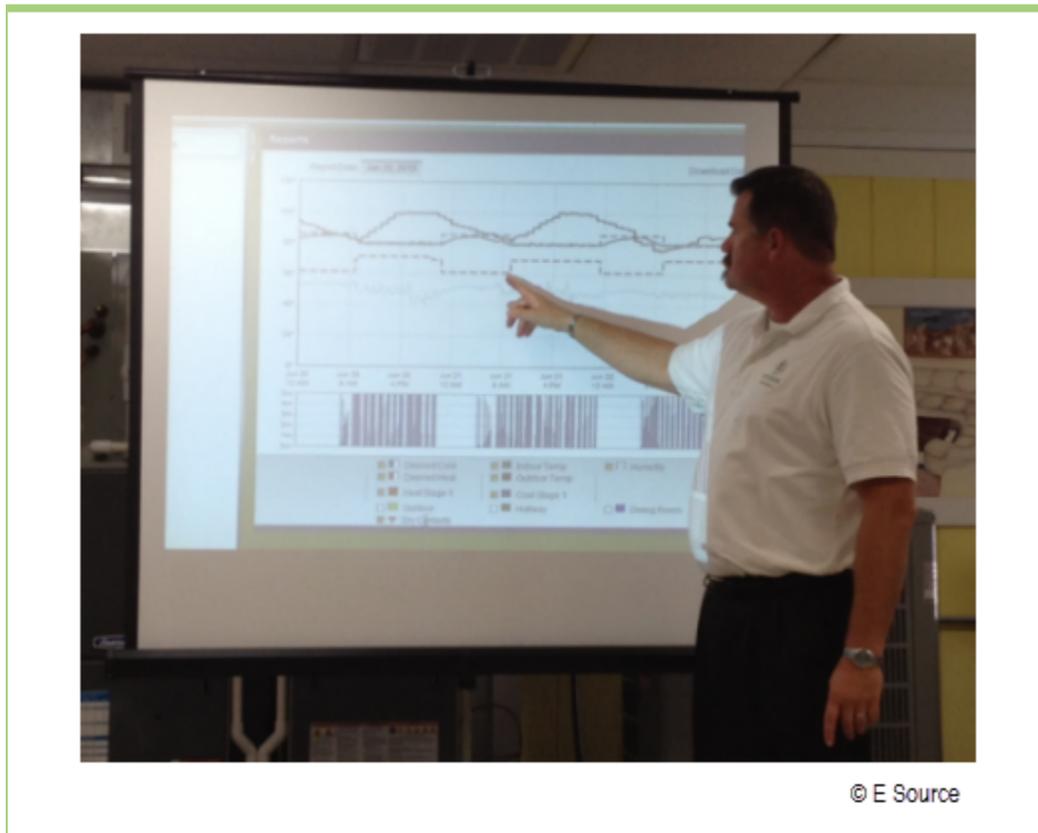


An Afternoon with Ecobee

By Lee Hamilton - Research Associate | [2 comments](#)

Last week, I had the pleasure of traveling to Denver for a thermostat demonstration. If you've read any of my previous blog posts, you'd know that driving half an hour to see a new thermostat is nothing—the nerd in me would have driven much farther. Our own Jay Stein recently referred to me as the "Thermostat King" in a meeting, so I have to live up to that reputation. And no, the free lunch had absolutely no impact on my attendance. Perhaps.

Free lunch or not, I had a great time toying around with Ecobee's Smart Thermostat and watching Mark Lance, regional sales manager, deliver a stellar demo.



Ecobee is a five-year old company based in Toronto. It has two really cool thermostats: the **Smart** and the **Smart Si**. These devices energized every nerd fiber in my body. They're good-looking, seemingly easy to use, and I can access them when I'm on the go.

However, Ecobee's products (along with most other smart thermostats in the market) are so much more than the device mounted on the wall. There's a full suite of tools available through an online portal, as well as a mobile app. Ecobee's thermostats come standard with Wi-Fi capabilities and can also be retrofitted with a ZigBee radio. I got to play around with the mobile app and, even though I only used it for a minute, it felt natural and simple.

Some other features worth mentioning are the energy history and scheduling functions. The energy history offered by Ecobee is impressive. Users can see 15 months of data, including information such as outdoor air temperature, indoor air temperature, desired indoor air temperature, indoor humidity, and run times for heating or cooling equipment.

The scheduling function was also impressive. It was easy to set up a schedule that uses setbacks during unoccupied or sleep periods. All the user has to do is answer a few questions and, presto, schedule made. Even more impressive was just how easy it was to make adjustments to the schedule, both temporary and permanent. Making the changes through the online portal was as simple as clicking and dragging with the mouse. Ecobee presented some compelling statistics during the demo about this programming feature, primarily that over 80 percent of Ecobee users are running some kind of setback program. That's a staggering number when you consider that the problem with programmable thermostats ultimately is that no one actually programs them. Add in the fact that Ecobee users are accessing the mobile app and online portal in high numbers, and I can't help but get giddy over the energy-saving potential of these kinds of devices.

So if you're like me and you LOVE thermostats—because come on, who doesn't—you'll be happy to hear that we have a full report coming out soon on the developing smart thermostat market. In it, we'll discuss what went wrong with the old devices, how the new devices are addressing these issues, and other developments that could push smart thermostats into the forefront. Then, we'll give a quick rundown of some of the biggest players in the market today, Ecobee included.

As we finalize our report, we'd love to hear about any experiences you've had with a smart thermostat, be it Ecobee, Nest, or any others. If you're skeptical about how successful these new thermostats will be, speak up; an optimist like myself always needs to hear from the other side of the coin. Or if you just love thermostats as much as I do, let's chat. I'm always ready to talk setbacks and schedules.

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