

HP, Lenovo, Dell Support Solar Power for PCs

Evan Koblentz, online editor



Productive Product: Let's start by clarifying a vital point: this story is about solar power adapters for conventional PCs, not about "solar-powered PCs" per se. You don't actually get a solar panel slapped to the side of your tower case; you get 86 pounds of schleppability. But you also get to help save the planet and circumvent your local power company.

Lenovo, which acquired IBM's PC division, is the latest company to join the trend. Their new [ThinkCentre A61e](#) [1] is \$399 after a rebate, runs on a mere 45 watts, and has EPEAT Gold certification. For solar power, Lenovo resells [Advanced Energy Group's](#) [2] Solar-PowerPAC II. The device uses a rolling cart and costs \$1,229 plus \$98 for shipping and handling. So while it's feasible to make your money back, it's mainly for making an energy statement. Another version for 230-V markets is only \$499, but it has one-third of the power capacity.

"It's really a little subjective in terms of what will be the benefit. But the device can power the PC and do it on a rather sustainable basis," said Carl McClellan, owner of Advanced Energy. On the other hand, "We don't have that type of business where what I buy is obsolete when I leave the store," he noted.

A new version is due out in the first quarter of next year. "This is not the magic bullet to power up the desktop PC, but it is a valid technical concept," he explained.

Lenovo isn't alone. Hewlett-Packard [began reselling](#) [3] the [same device](#) [4] for [point-of-sale computers](#) [5] in June, McClellan said. Also, "Dell has not released yet, but they've got the equipment and completing their laboratory testing. I expect they'll be on board soon," probably within 30 days, McClellan said. Dell recently announced the [OptiPlex 755](#) [6] energy-efficient system but without mentioning the prospect of solar power.

A Dell spokesperson was not available for comment this afternoon.

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It is also possible to [build your own](#) [7] solar power system or to consider a [flash-based solar computer](#) [8].

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[6] http://www.dell.com/content/topics/global.aspx/corp/pressoffice/en/2007/2007_08_27_rr_000?c=us&l=en&s=corp

[7] http://www.tomshardware.com/2007/09/06/technical_foundations_diy_solar_powered_pc/

[8] <http://www.solarlite.org/>