Micro-Windmills could mean the end of taking your phone charger with you everywhere you go

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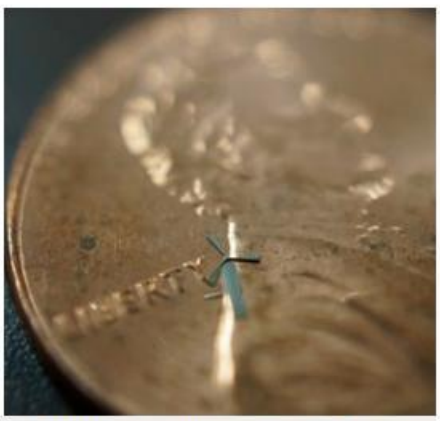
Mobile phone companies are constantly developing smartphone batteries that last longer and charge quicker. It has seemed like this battery struggle would continue forever because consumers are not satisfied as long as their battery noticeably dwindles. Personally, if my iPhone isn't at 100%, I'm not at 100%. Anders (That's my phone's name. It's not weird.) and I are one.

Smitha Rao and JC Chiao from UT Arlington have created micro-windmill technology that is, at its widest point, 1.8 millimeters. That means ten of them can fit on one grain of rice. Ten! The researchers see the micro-windmills as the potential solution to the question of how to harness wind energy without the use of turbines that are big enough to have their own zip codes.

The concept goes like this: when your phone dies, you take out a sleeve covered in teeny, tiny wind mills, put it on the phone, wave the phone around like you're hailing a cab without any thought to your darling's safety (I'd never treat you like that, Anders.) or blow on it, and voila! Your phone and soul are once again fully charged.



A micro-windmill placed on a penny. University of Texas at Arlington.

The devices have already been tested and hold up as a viable option. The itty-bitty mills are easy and inexpensive to create, which means the every day consumer is first in line to be the target demographic for the awesome little energy warriors.

What's great about this technology is that, from the information we've got, it seems to have no *major* scientific hurtles left to leap. This is actually a working device that could very well make its way to the market in the future.

The researchers acknowledge that this technology could be the answer to many problems. Rao said, "We've only scratched the surface on how these micro-windmills might be used." Because of the size, flat panels could be mounted to harvest energy for homes and buildings.

Is it far-fetched to think that this could solve the world's fuel problem? Imagine a world where cars are covered in microscopic, energy-harvesting windmills. No trips to the gas station, no plugging electronic cars in, and no worldwide abuse of a finite resource. Maybe it's too good to be true, or maybe we're staring down the barrel of a more utopian future. Maybe I'm an irrational optimist. Either way, the windmills look promising.

TAGS: JC Chiao, Miro-Windmills, smartphones, Smitha Rao, UT Arlington

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