

COULD TINY WINDMILLS REALLY CHARGE YOUR PHONE?

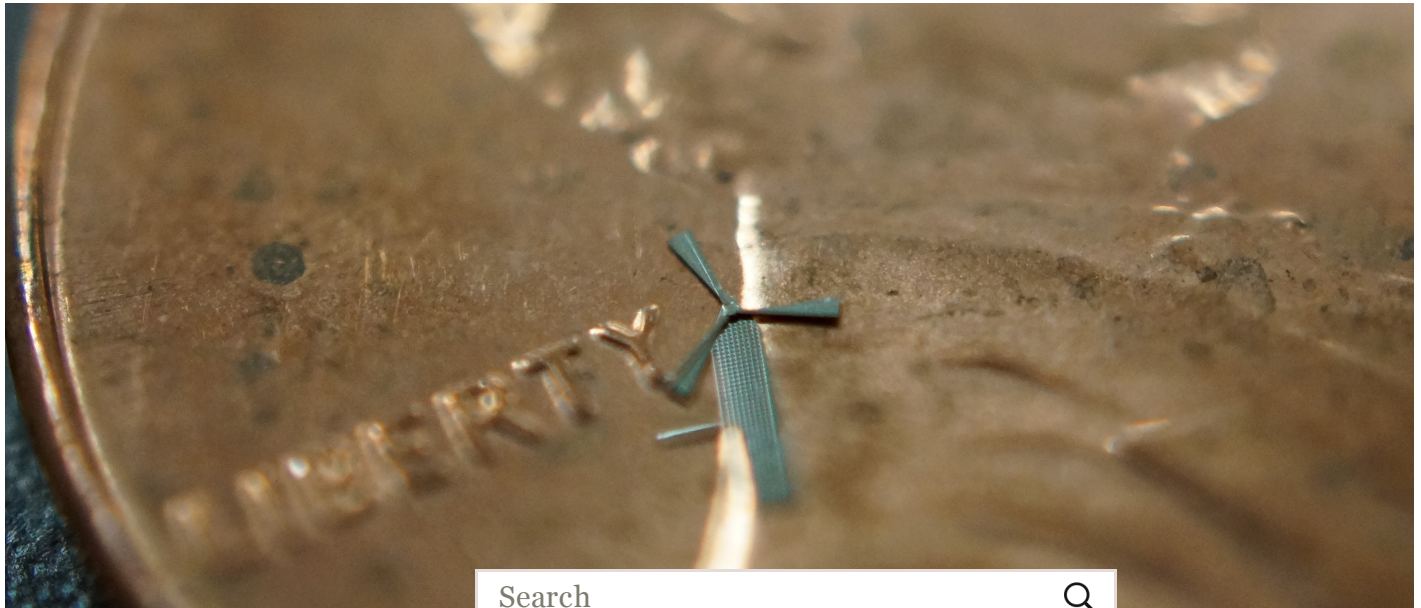
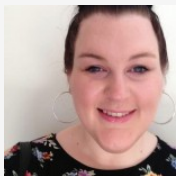


Photo Credit: J.C. Chiao

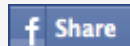
#Tech #clickables #science #smartphones #technology #windmills

**By Jennifer Still**

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We've all been there before: you're out and about for the day, and by the time your lunch break rolls around, your phone is nearly out of battery power... and there's still hours left to go before you can get home to charge it! While some of us have gotten smart and learned to keep an extra charger at our desk or in our bags, they can be cumbersome and annoying to keep around.

So is there a way to stay powered up without dragging around cords and cables? Maybe! Researchers at the University of Texas Arlington have been working on just the thing: tiny windmills that could theoretically hook up to your phone and charge it, using only the air around us as a power source! What? Amazing!



These tiny windmills are so small that ten of them can fit on a grain of rice, and the idea is that several of them could be connected to our phones – whether built in or otherwise – and just by waving the phone in the air for a few minutes, our battery power would go up. Of course, all of this is still in the very early stages of development, but the research looks promising.

Smitha Rao and J.-C. Chiao are the brains behind the operation, and they're intent on finding a solution to a problem that plagues millions on a daily basis. Admit it: we're addicted to our technology. Now we just have to get smarter about using it. Taiwanese company WinMEMS Technologies Co. agrees, which is why they've taken such an interest in Rao and Chiao's work and hope to bring this **innovative solution** to life.

“It’s very gratifying to first be noticed by an international company and second to work on something like this where you can see immediately how it might be used,” said Rao, who earned her Ph.D in 2009 at UT Arlington. “However, I think we’ve only scratched the surface on how these micro-windmills might be used.”

It's amazing to see the ways in which we continue to advance our understanding of the technology we're creating and how quickly tools are being shaped around those advances to make our lives easier and more efficient. I don't know about you, but I'd charge my phone with a mini windmill any day!

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



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