

## Power in my pocket

Aimee Kalnoskas, Editor-in-Chief

I think it has finally happened. I have reached the tipping point in my purchasing of battery-powered portable electronic devices. That said, I should clarify that alongside many of my peers I am gadget-challenged. Still, I just can't get that excited about applications like on-the-go streaming video and audio because the not-so-supercharged cloud hanging over all those cool devices that run these applications is power and time -- operating time, recharging time, replacement time. It just doesn't seem very relaxing to me to attempt to watch a TV program or movie on a portable video device when all the while I'll be thinking that this power-hungry application is requiring processor, screen and audio drivers running wide open the whole time, and drawing even more power as it seeks to wirelessly hunt down and maintain that elusive five-bar signal. Even as I write this column in my wirelessly-enabled home, I am reminded every hour or so with just one low-power warning message that the convenience of moving from room to room with my laptop is annoyingly offset by the fact that I have to situate myself next to an outlet to recharge my battery. I am not so certain that we are really that technologically removed from Volta's day when rechargeables first appeared but, until late in the 19 century, could only be charge by another battery. In the context of portable devices, the wall outlet feels like just another cumbersome battery.

This brings me to my own upside-down version of a "killer app". The application is power itself and the mythical device is something I call the iPortP or My Personal Portable Power. One definition of a killer application states that it is an application so compelling that it can, all by itself, justify the purchase of a given device. My iPortP is the application of power and it can, all by itself, justify the purchase of the very electronic devices I have foresworn. My iPortP is a great little device that happens to incorporate lots of cool capabilities like wireless video, voice, and music but those things are simply riding piggyback on my personal portable power device. Besides, the real-estate that processing power claims is shrinking. Just ask Moore.

Shortly after I decided upon my powerful dreamworld device, I stumbled upon an article announcing the launch this fall of the Energizer "[Energi To Go \[1\]](#)" accessory that provides portable power not only for Apple's iPod but also for, claims the company, many leading cell phones and mini-USB devices such as the Blackberry. Could this be the forerunner to my iPortP or is Energizer Holdings as far gone as I am?

For a more serious perspective on the portable power conundrum, I suggest you turn to our new editorial section, Brainstorm, on page 38 and read excerpts from the real experts about the technical challenges in portable power and what they think will further the development of power management in portable systems. As you may discern from their full commentaries on the ECN website ([www.ecnmag.com/Brainstorm.aspx](http://www.ecnmag.com/Brainstorm.aspx) [2]), it is not only about digital controller ICs and as one expert stated, "...some very elegant and effective analog alternatives." It

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Published on Electronic Component News (<http://www.ecnmag.com>)

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is as much about technological challenges as it is about mindset challenges.

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