

Support Grows for Universal Power Adapter

Written by Bob Snyder
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Driven by the proliferation of devices like cell phones, MP3 players and digital cameras, at least 3 billion power adapters will be shipped worldwide this year, up from 2.2 billion only three years ago.



Find a way to eliminate the need to ship a separate power adapter to convert AC into the required DC power for each and every electronics device...and you've found a technology that can really help the environment.

And that's exactly what one start-up company has found: Green Plug's technology allows each device to communicate its individual power requirements to the power adapter, allowing several devices to share one adapter.

Overall success depends on getting support from manufacturers who will embed Green Plug's firmware into their devices so power requirements can be communicated to the adapter. Green Plug offers its firmware to electronics makers for free (they hope to make money by licensing the technology to chip-makers.) Vendors who want to include the technology in each device may spend about \$2 to do so.

At the second meeting of the Alliance for Universal Power Supplies (group of electronics vendors, power supply makers, utility companies and others promoting standard power systems), Westinghouse Electronics publicly signed on for Green Plug.

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Westinghouse, American maker of LCD TVs, PC monitors and digital photo frames, hopes its commitment to use Green Plug's single "universal adapter" to power their laptops, cell phones and other electronics gear will inspire other makers.

What's holding up such a great idea if it's free? Some companies think if they ship a product without an adapter, the consumer may worry and decide to buy a competitive product that does offers one.

Other vendors don't want to eliminate unique power supplies (and connector cables) as they represent high margin add-on profits for the company.

And some company lawyers are worried about liability. Unless it is an industry standard, any company connected could be sued in USA if a fire starts in a home around the devices.

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