Wireless charging tech for metal case devices announced

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Credit: Qualcomm

Power up without plugging in—that has been the catchy slogan of Qualcomm's WiPower and now WiPower has reached a milestone: power up without plugging in even if the mobile device has a metal case.

Qualcomm took center-stage on Tuesday with the news. Qualcomm Technologies, a subsidiary of Qualcomm, on Tuesday beat its drum in announcing it was the first to enable wireless charging for mobile devices with metal cases. Until now, charging a device with a metal exterior has been incompatible with wireless charging technologies. The company said that WiPower can operate at a frequency more tolerant of metal objects coming within the charge field.

The company said that "techniques for designing a device to charge through a metal back cover, as well as the full suite of WiPower reference designs," were now available to WiPower licensees.

What's ahead was explained by Lance Whitney in *CNET*: "At this point, Qualcomm has invented the technology, so it's not yet available on a commercial level where consumers can take advantage of it. The technology itself requires that mobile device manufacturers add the ability to charge a device through a metal cover or exterior. The design methods for doing so are now available to companies that license the WiPower technology. So now it's up to mobile phone and tablet makers to incorporate the technology into their devices."

The company is upbeat, saying that, "With the Qualcomm solution, we expect the adoption of wireless charging to accelerate by removing a previous barrier for phone designers."

The technology was designed to be compliant with the Rezence standard. Qualcomm said it was one of the first member companies (referring to the Alliance for Wireless Power) to receive Rezence certification on multiple receiver and transmitter designs. In 2012, Qualcomm was a co-founder of the Alliance. The aim is to support the evolution of wireless power technology, products, and services, and it establishes a global specification for wireless power and charging under the Rezence brand.

Steve Pazol, general manager of wireless charging, Qualcomm, said, "Today, more device manufacturers are choosing to utilize metal alloys in their product designs to provide greater structural support and, of course, aesthetics. QTIs engineering advancement eliminates a major obstacle facing wireless power and opens up the continued adoption of this desirable feature to a much wider range of consumer electronics and use cases."

WiPower can charge devices requiring up to 22 watts today, at speeds equal to or faster when compared to other wireless charging technologies.

Also, Qualcomm said the technology "enables simultaneous charging of multiple devices with different power requirements while using Bluetooth Smart to minimize hardware requirements."