Sony patent application talks about method for wirelessly juicing up devices via NFC

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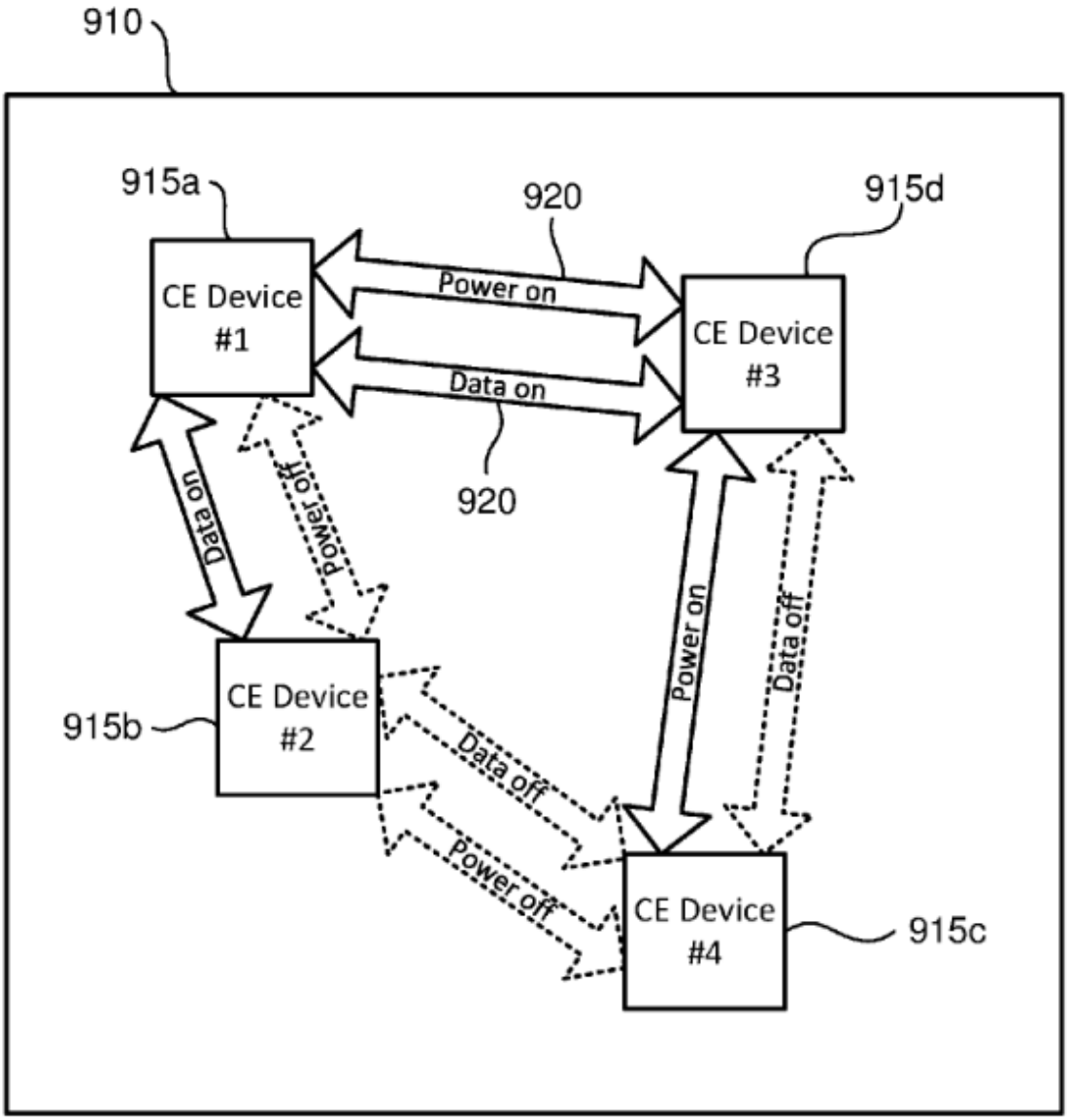

Credit: United States Patent Application 20170063431

(Tech Xplore)—Wirelessly charging your phone using your friend's phone? You have to hand it to Sony for bright ideas. James Milne, True Xiong and Charles McCoy are named as the inventors on a Sony patent application published earlier this month.

A patent application published earlier hits month was filed in November last year and is titled, "Configuration of Data and Power Transfer in Near Field Communications."

Well, what are real friends for. Tyler Lee in *Ubergizmo* commented how, according to the idea, "your friend could loan you some of their battery by letting you siphon off them wirelessly, almost like a vampire!"

Briefly, the application discusses a method for wireless transferring both data *and* power between two consumer electronics devices such as smartphone, said *WhatAFuture*.

The devices would have an antenna system, with at least two, one for wireless electricity transfer and one for data transfer, the report said.

In a scenario where a person looks for a Wifi hotspot, and finds multiple devices capable of transferring electricity wirelessly, the person would be able to choose which to get data from and which the person wanted to get power wirelessly.

So a point can be made that this idea is hardly limited to just smartphones.

Tyler Lee in *Ubergizmo* said, "a variety of consumer electronics could be

used, such as a fridge, TV, computer, microwave, washing machine, and so on. Basically, the idea is that all your home appliances could technically become sources of wireless energy so that your device will always remain charged without the need for wires."

This would not be the first time Sony presented such an idea. *WhatAFuture* said "Sony first disclosed wireless transfer of electricity between portable devices like our smartphone way back in 2014."

So what is this patent, then?

It is a "Continuation-in-part" of the application that Sony filed in 2014, said *WhatAFuture*. "A continuation-in-part is a kind of 'add-on' to an existing patent application. You disclose your invention in a parent patent application. You then do further research and add new discoveries in a parent application."

Sharmishta Sarkar of *TechRadar*: "The concept behind this wireless charging is an antenna system, like near-field communication (NFC) chips, which would be able to search for and connect to devices with similar tech located within a certain distance, similar to searching for a Wi-Fi hotspot."

Andrew Liszewski-in *Gizmodo*, meanwhile, had some useful background on Sony's technology journey related to this patent.

"Sony has long been a strong supporter of wireless NFC (Near Field Communication) technology, relying on it to make syncing its mobile devices to other hardware, like Bluetooth speakers, considerably easier." He said the patent seemed interested in expanding NFC's capabilities to wirelessly sharing power.

However, Sony brains may have lots still to think about.

"NFC is a short-range, low-power solution for transferring data, which is why two devices have to be tapped, or held very closely, for transfers and connections to work. True wireless charging, like what's detailed in Sony's patent, requires a lot more juice, even over just a few feet, which would quickly drain one device, while only trickle-charging the second."

The patent suggests an exciting future where you can walk into a room and wirelessly connect to both wi-fi and power, said Liszewski, but "the technology to make it happen still has a lot of catching up to do."

When it does catch up, hooray. We are all headed toward a power-hungry life at home and on the move. As the patent description stated, "The number and types of consumer electronic devices continues to increase. Furthermore, many of these consumer electronic devices are portable. As such, battery power is often critical. In many instances, a user may have to limit their use of a device because of limited remaining power. Similarly, a user may be unable to effectively use a device because of a lack of power stored on the device."

More information: Configuration of Data and Power Transfer in Near Field Communications, United States Patent Application 20170063431.