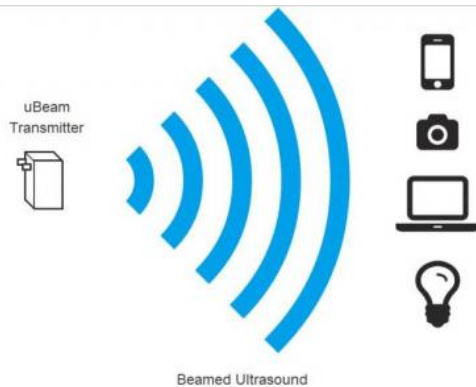


# Charging with ultrasound: uBeam has functional prototype

8 August 2014, by Nancy Owano



Credit: uBeam

uBeam on Wednesday announced its first "fully functional prototype," ready to build for consumers. This is a company that on its Careers page tells visitors, "We're on a mission to untether the world," and that they seek people "looking to make tectonic shifts in the world of electricity." The Wednesday announcement has attracted attention in the press because it is all about wireless charging—and many device owners say, won't that be the day of days. Why are we still fumbling with chargers if developers and designers are working in 2014 to craft elegantly wireless products? That is a question that was not lost on uBeam founder, Meredith Perry. Her company uBeam intends to go to market with a wireless charging platform that uses ultrasound to send electricity to devices through the air which can charge portable electronics wirelessly.

Here's how it works, said Engadget: "a thin [charging station](#) takes [electricity](#) and converts it into sounds, which are then transmitted over ultrasound. A receiver stuck to a [phone](#) or any other device then catches those sound waves and converts them back into energy."

Perry, according to a blog by Nick Bilton in The New York Times, noted how this wireless power system could allow you to be on your phone and moving around a room freely while the device is charging. According to Bilton, Perry's intent is to have products on the shelves within the next two years. Perry said two different charging products will be targeted for different consumer types, one product built for homes and offices, and the other, for larger uBeam chargers, an industrial-size product for large facilities. Transmitters could be tacked to walls like wallpaper or made into decorative art to beam electricity to devices. Smartphones and laptops could be equipped with thin receivers. The receivers would convert audio and charge the devices. "We're going to sell directly to consumers, and we'll sell them to restaurant chains and hotels—we are going to saturate the market with uBeam transmitters," Perry said. "In addition to your local coffee shop [saying](#) it has free Wi-Fi, it will also say it has free uBeam."

Whether or not your local hangouts will have such signs, one thing is for sure: less burdensome forms of charging will be welcomed, as a TechRadar editor indicated back in May. "Sometimes it's hard to remember we're in the future. That this is supposed to be the point when we have flying cars/space pills/robot companions," said Gareth Beavis, phones and tablets editor, TechRadar. Surely, he said, we are supposed to be in a tangle-free world by now. Beavis asked, "why do we still [need](#) so many chargers? The technology is there. Whether it's inductive or magnetic resonance doesn't matter one bit to most people. What entices consumers is the notion of being able to toss down a phone, tablet and pair of wireless headphones on the bedside table and have them all fully charged by the morning."

**More information:** Qi wireless charging standard offers more design freedom: [techxplore.com/news/2014-08-qi...tandard-freedom.html](http://techxplore.com/news/2014-08-qi...tandard-freedom.html)

uBeam: [ubeam.com/](http://ubeam.com/)

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