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Wireless charging is set to truly hit the mainstream with the iPhone 8, but a startup named Pi wants to further extend the reach of the technology-- specifically by 30cm, through the imaginatively named Pi Charger.



As debuted at the TechCrunch Disrupt Battlefield event, the Pi Charger is a conical device able to charge multiple devices within around 30cm in any direction. It is not a full-room wireless charging offering, the the maker promises it actually works, and does so without need to put devices on a charging pad.

The technology behind the Pi Charger is resonant induction, the same used by the Qi standard found in the new iPhones. It is paired with a special beam forming algorithm allowing Pi to shape and direct the magnetic fields around the device. This allows users to charge a smartphone by putting it next to the charger, as opposed to directly on it.

Pi adds users can move the device while charging, and it continues to do so in different orientations. It is compatible with all kinds of devices-- so long they carry wireless charging technology or are wearing an appropriate magnetic charging case-- and can charge up to 4 phones at full speed. Maximum output totals 20W, but the makers say it is theoretically possible to increase the power by integrating components with a higher power rating.

The Pi Charger should hit the market "sometime" in 2018. The startup also considers integrating the technology in other products, such as smart speakers or smart home hubs.

Go Pi