

Tech Bit 17

Powering Most Electronics Anywhere

I “joke” with the TSA agents looking at the x-ray of my backpack I carry onto planes that it is a walking Radio Shack.

I have the usual electronic travel toys: notebook computer, MP3 player, noise canceling headphones, wireless mouse, cell phone, etc. I also occasionally carry a portable printer and/or a portable scanner.

The problem with all these toys is they all need power. And they all have different power bricks (AC adapters). Plus on long flights if you are lucky you can plug your computer and/or MP3 player into the plane’s power supply, which of course is a unique plug.

Rather than carry all those bricks and second adapters for airplanes, I use a universal power adapter. There are a number of companies that make these adapters. iGo was an early one (<http://www.igo.com/>). More recently Kensington has made a small unit (<http://us.kensington.com/html/11168.html>). Targus has a large number of notebook accessories, one is a universal adapter (<http://www.targus.com/us/powerstore.asp>).

All these adapters work the same way.

The adapter comes with an AC cord, an empower cord, and a car cigarette lighter to empower adapter. They are compatible with any power, either 110 or 220 volt and 50 or 60 Hz. They come with a number of interchangeable tips

that let you power different notebook computers (I’ve been creative and figured out how to power my portable printer using a similar computer’s tip).



You can also buy a secondary adapter cable that will charge MP3 players or cell phones. Again they use interchangeable tips to adapt for many different devices.

The bottom line on these universal power adapters is the best one for you is the one that has the tips to power the notebook, cell phone and any other electronic toys you might travel with. Let the tip wars begin! Right now iGo (and its OEMs) seems to be winning.

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