

EU votes for universal phone charger

18th March



Have you ever wondered why every smartphone manufacturer makes a charger for its phone that is different from the rest? Lawmakers at the European Union

have also been pondering the same mystery. Consumers should welcome a new, common-sense initiative voted for by European politicians. The EU has decided that all smartphone companies will soon have to make the plug adaptor that connects to the electricity supply the same. They did not vote on making the other end of the cable, the part that connects to the phone itself, the same. This will leave many consumers feeling somewhat perplexed. They may well view the upcoming law as a half measure. There were calls to also standardize the connector that fits into the phone.

The dizzying variety in designs of current adaptors is detrimental to the environment. Every time someone buys a new phone, they usually end up throwing away their old charger and paying for another one that fits their new device. EU politician Barbara Weiler said the new law would help the environment by cutting down on electronic waste. She told reporters: "It will put an end to charger clutter and 51,000 tons of electronic waste annually." She added: "The current incompatibility of chargers for mobile phones, smart phones, tablets, digital cameras and music players is a nightmare and a real inconvenience for consumers." Manufacturers have until 2017 to comply with the new directive.

Sources: BBC / SiliconRepublic.com / Euractiv.com

Writing

All adaptors, cables, plugs, etc. on all devices should be standardized. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

wondered / smartphone / mystery / initiative / cable / perplexed / consumers / variety / throwing away / device / electronic waste / nightmare / inconvenience

True / False

- EU lawmakers have been pandering over smartphone chargers. T / F
- The article describes a new law as being one of common sense. T / F
- The connector to the actual smartphone is to be standardized. T / F
- Many consumers won't understand the decision made by the EU. T / F
- The constant replacement of old chargers is bad for the environment. T / F
- Over 50,000 tons of chargers are thrown away each year. T / F
- A politician said phone chargers give people bad dreams. T / F
- Smartphone makers have 5 years to change their chargers. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. wondered | a. mismatch |
| 2. pondering | b. look at |
| 3. initiative | c. diversity |
| 4. connects | d. strategy |
| 5. view | e. speculated about |
| 6. variety | f. reducing |
| 7. fits | g. adhere to |
| 8. cutting down on | h. considering |
| 9. incompatibility | i. matches |
| 10. comply with | j. joins |

Discussion – Student A

- Do you think phones will be cheaper if you don't need a new charger every time?
- What else can electronics companies do to reduce waste?
- What do you do when your phone is dead and you cannot find your charger?
- Should houses have device chargers already in the walls?
- What is the biggest nightmare about electronics?
- Are electronics always a convenience?
- When will smartphones disappear and what will replace them?
- What would you like to ask an electronics company boss?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. a new, common- | a. supply |
| 2. connects to the electricity | b. for consumers |
| 3. the part that | c. measure |
| 4. view the upcoming law as a half | d. variety in designs |
| 5. There were calls to also standardize | e. on electronic waste |
| 6. The dizzying | f. sense initiative |
| 7. detrimental | g. the connector |
| 8. cutting down | h. to the environment |
| 9. a real inconvenience | i. the new directive |
| 10. comply with | j. connects to the phone |

Discussion – Student B

- Why do companies make different chargers?
- What do you think of the new EU law?
- Is the new law a half measure?
- Why aren't plugs and connectors the same all over the world?
- Isn't it better for the end that goes into the phone to be the same?
- What leaves you feeling perplexed about electronics?
- How would wireless chargers change your life?
- How would never-ending batteries change your life?

Spelling

- smartphone ruumfceatanr
- pondering the same yrsemty
- a new, common-sense ieaiitntv
- connects to the electricity uypslp
- leave many consumers feeling somewhat relpdeexp
- view the upcoming law as a half asurmee
- The dizzying tervyai in designs
- enmrdeliatt to the environment
- EU niocitapl Barbara Weiler said...
- 51,000 tons of electronic waste ulylaann
- The current ocptbmailitinyi of chargers
- a real ecieivocnennn for consumers

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. d	4. j	5. b
6. c	7. i	8. f	9. a	10. g

Role Play

Role A – Phone down the toilet

You think a phone down the toilet is the biggest nightmare. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so bad with their problems. Also, tell the others which is the easiest of these to fix (and why): no wi-fi for a week, your e-mail password being hacked or being banned from Facebook.

Role B – No wi-fi for a week

You think no wi-fi for a week is the biggest nightmare. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so bad with their problems. Also, tell the others which is the easiest of these to fix (and why): a phone down the toilet, your e-mail password being hacked or being banned from Facebook.

Role C – E-mail password hacked

You think your e-mail password being hacked is the biggest nightmare. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so bad with their problems. Also, tell the others which is the easiest of these to fix (and why): no wi-fi for a week, a phone down the toilet or being banned from Facebook.

Role D – Banned from Facebook

You think being banned from Facebook is the biggest nightmare. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that aren't so bad with their problems. Also, tell the others which is the easiest of these to fix (and why): no wi-fi for a week, your e-mail password being hacked or a phone down the toilet.

Speaking – Nightmare

Rank these with your partner. Put the biggest nightmare at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • phone down the toilet | • all computer files corrupted |
| • no wi-fi for a week | • log-in password forgotten |
| • serious computer virus | • e-mail password hacked |
| • cyber-bully | • banned from Facebook |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.