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Dave McClure • Jan. 31, 2012

There is a strange curse that comes with being a geek. It drives you to want to try tech toys and utilities even if you don't have an immediate need for them. Or sometimes, just because you want to know if they work as advertised.

So before a recent flight across the pond (in this case, the Pacific Ocean), I found myself in one of the kiosks at the airport that sells hardware toys for twice their normal price, looking at one of the gizmos that claims to recharge your mobile devices using standard AA batteries.

To cut to the quick, it does work. Um, sort of.

Let's begin with the basics. What I purchased, for \$29.95 at a Best Buy Express vending machine, was the iGo powerXtender battery operated charger that uses two AA batteries and comes with four tips that fit the USB or power ports of a variety of mobile devices. It also comes with two batteries, and an instruction sheet printed in microscopic type size. Just a hint: you can buy one online through Amazon.Com or other vendor for under \$10.

Armed with a handful of batteries, I whiled away the hours testing it on a variety of devices.

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