



Jesper Pagh

I am a designer devoted to sustainability, technology, experiences and human behavior.

On the Sunny Side of the Street



Charging your mobile phone might seem as the most trivial task, but if you are one of the approx. 550 homeless living in the streets in Denmark it is not. While owning and using a mobile phone is common to most homeless people, access to the power needed to charge the battery often demands going to shelters where access to power outlets is in great demand and mobile phones often disappear when left unmonitored.

Though the mobile phone does not provide for food, heat or peace of mind, it is an important tool making it possible to keep in contact with friends, family and social authorities and giving at least a feeling of safety when sleeping in the streets or in case of illness or an emergency – as long as it is charged.

But who says you need a fixed power outlet to get power for the charging? Being outside most of the time, as a homeless you have direct access to the power from the sun – portable and renewable energy unlimited. You just need a tool to make use of it.

In a new design of the carrier bags for the salespersons of the Danish street paper 'Hus Forbi', the Danish Design company [Faktor 3](#) shows one good example. In collaboration with Hus Forbi and the [Agenda 21 centre in Bispebjerg-Brønshøj-Husum](#), they have developed a new design of the salespersons' carrier bag with solar panels on the outside and a charging module and a battery on the inside which provides for the opportunity of 'saving' solar power to also charge the mobile phone after dark. Thus the bag carried along by the salesperson anyway now also functions as a mobile charging station empowering the homeless to be able to communicate in a true wireless fashion. That is good design.

The idea originates from a homeless who got inspired by seeing a fountain functioning without traditional power supply but with the help of solar panels and this Thursday, November 5, at 1pm the new carrier bag is presented at an event at De hjemløses hus (House of the Homeless), Falkevej 2-4, Copenhagen NV. Klaus Bondam, mayor and chair of Copenhagen's Technical and Environmental committee will be there to speak along with Tanja Møller Jensen from the Agenda 21 centre and designer Barbara Bentzen, owner of Faktor 3.

By Jesper Pagh • November 2, 2009

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Posted November 16, 2009 at 1:17 pm by [Dagmar](#) | [Permalink](#)

This is cool. Great help for homeless people. But who says you need to be homeless to be happy about such a battery-recharging carrier-bag? My battery often runs out and why not use solar energy for avoiding this? Unfortunately, solar energy is still not a big topic in Denmark. Understandable with such grey weather as today. But the more we use new technology the better it gets and smart people will find new ways.



Posted November 16, 2009 at 1:27 pm by [Jesper Pagh](#) | [Permalink](#)

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As far as I know you can actually buy the solar panel / battery kit and mount it yourself (without the bag). You could write to Barbara at Faktor 3 and ask:

barbara@faktor-3.dk

There are several reasons why solar energy is not widely spread in Denmark. One of them is of course extensive public subsidisation of the wind mill industry. But another important point about renewable energy and solar panels is that it is not until recent years that technology has been developed to a stage where the panels in their life time can produce more energy than it takes to manufacture them.

Apart from that I believe you are absolutely right: New technology needs implementation in relevant applications to be widely spread, accepted and thus helpful.

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