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WIRELESS POWER APPARATUS, SYSTEM AND METHOD

Abstract

An apparatus, system and method for wirelessly powering a device. The apparatus, system and method may include a primary coil housing that houses a primary coil; a secondary coil housed within the device and suitable for having power induced therein responsive to the primary coil; an isolator that at least partially mechanically and electrically isolates the primary coil from the secondary coil; and a plurality of paired feedback sensors respectively communicatively and physically associated with, and paired as between, the primary coil housing and the device, wherein the plurality of paired feedback sensors exchanges indications regarding performance of the secondary coil, and wherein performance of the primary coil is modified responsively to the indications.

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Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS [0001] This application is a Continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 18/523,230 filed Nov. 29, 2023, which is a Continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/561,145 filed Dec. 23, 2021, which is a Continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/659,081, filed Oct. 21, 2019, which is a Continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/671,508, filed Mar. 27, 2015, which claims priority to U.S. Provisional Application No. 62/033,046, filed on Aug. 4, 2014, each of which are each incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

BACKGROUND

Field of the Disclosure

[0002] The field of the disclosure is power, and, more particularly, is an apparatus, system and method for providing wireless power.

Background of the Disclosure

[0003] Modern electrical appliances typically receive operative power via a coupling to a source of alternating current at a fairly constant frequency and voltage. For example, electrical wiring and power outlets are commonly provided in the United States to deliver electrical power at a frequency of 60 Hz, a voltage of 120 or 240 volts, and a current determined by the power needs of the appliance. The circuits that provide such power are typically referred to as “mains circuits” or “primary supplies.” Primary supply parameters different from the foregoing may be common in other countries. For example, in some countries 50 Hz is a common power supply frequency.

[0004] In general, to provide power to an electrical appliance, the internal wiring of the appliance is coupled to a power cord terminating in a plug with two (or more) prongs. The plug is coupled (“plugged in”) to a power outlet receiving primary supply power, where the prongs each contact a different electrical conductor with a voltage difference therebetween. The voltage difference across the prongs causes current to flow through the appliance wiring and provides power to operate the appliance.

[0005] However, the use of electrical plugs and appliance cords, and the need to mate the two in order to power the appliance, provides significant drawbacks. These issues include inconvenient concentration of appliances near a plug, the frequent need to unplug one appliance to enable use of another, the possibility of overload, etc.

[0006] Therefore, to address these and other issues, the need exists for an apparatus, system, and method of providing, monitoring and controlling wireless power.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0007] The disclosure includes, in part, exemplary embodiments of an apparatus, system and

method for receiving power at an appliance. An exemplary apparatus, system and method may include a secondary coil within a housing physically associated with the appliance and suitable for providing induced operative current from a primary coil magnetically proximate to, and at least partially isolated from, the secondary coil; an appliance controller coupled to the secondary coil and suitable to receive an indication of at least one of a shape, frequency, and magnitude of an operative waveform to be provided to the appliance, and suitable to generate data indicators according to the indication; and at least one sensor, such as an infrared transmitter, communicatively coupled to the appliance controller and suitable to receive ones of the data indicators from the appliance controller and to transmit the ones of the data indicators wirelessly to at least one data receiver associated with the primary coil to stimulate operation of the primary coil to produce the operative waveform in the secondary coil. The disclosed embodiments may further include a secondary sensor communicatively coupled to the appliance controller and suitable to transmit other ones of the data indicators.

[0008] The disclosure also includes, in part, exemplary embodiments of an apparatus, system and method for providing power to an appliance. The apparatus, system and method may include a primary coil within a housing that is physically separate from, and that at least partially provides mechanical and electrical isolation from, a secondary coil physically associated with the appliance, wherein the primary coil is suitable for inducing a current in the secondary coil when magnetically proximate to the second coil; a primary coil controller coupled to the primary coil within the housing and suitable to indicate a primary coil waveform to be provided at the primary coil; and a feedback receiver within the housing which is suitable to receive feedback data regarding a secondary coil waveform induced in the secondary coil responsively to the primary coil waveform, and to modify the primary coil waveform responsively to the feedback data.

[0009] The disclosed exemplary embodiments further include an apparatus, system and method for wirelessly powering a device. The apparatus, system and method may include a primary coil housing that houses a primary coil; a secondary coil housed within the device and suitable for having power induced therein responsive to the primary coil; an isolator that at least partially mechanically and electrically isolates the primary coil from the secondary coil; and a plurality of paired feedback sensors respectively communicatively and physically associated with, and paired as between, the primary coil housing and the device, wherein the plurality of paired feedback sensors exchanges indications regarding performance of the secondary coil, and wherein performance of the primary coil is modified responsively to the indications.

[0010] An exemplary primary coil housing may be a cooktop, a countertop, a tabletop, or a standalone housing. The induced power may be in the range of 1 W to 10 W, or in the range of 1 kW to 4.5 kW, by way of non-limiting example.

[0011] Thus, the disclosed exemplary embodiments provide an apparatus, system, and method of providing, monitoring and controlling wireless power.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0012] Understanding of the present disclosure will be facilitated by consideration of the following detailed description of the embodiments taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which like numerals refer to like parts, and in which:

[0013] FIG. 1 illustrates an induction power system;

[0014] FIG. 2 illustrates an infrared transmission and reception system;

[0015] FIG. 3 is a diagrammatic illustration of a kitchen appliance resident upon a primary coil housing;

[0016] FIG. 4 is a signal diagram of an IR signal that is reflective of rectified received power;

[0017] FIG. 5 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary inductive power and feedback system in accordance with the disclosure;

[0018] FIG. 6 illustrates a block diagram of an appliance according to the disclosed embodiments;

[0019] FIGS. 7A and 7B are schematic diagrams illustrating aspects of the disclosed embodiments;

[0020] FIGS. 8A, 8B and 8C are schematic diagrams illustrating aspects of the disclosed embodiments;

[0021] FIG. 9 is a schematic diagram illustrating aspects of the disclosed embodiments;

[0022] FIG. 10 is a schematic block diagram illustrating aspects of the disclosed embodiments;

[0023] FIG. 11 illustrates an exemplary driver circuit for a primary coil;

[0024] FIG. 12 is a block diagram illustrating aspects of the disclosed embodiments; and

[0025] FIG. 13 is a block diagram illustrating aspects of the disclosed embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENTS

[0026] It is to be understood that the figures and descriptions of the present disclosure have been simplified to illustrate elements that are relevant for a clear understanding of the disclosure, while eliminating, for the purpose of clarity and brevity, many other elements found in similar apparatuses, systems, and methods. Those of ordinary skill in the art may recognize that other elements and/or steps are desirable and/or required in implementing the presently disclosed embodiments. However, because such elements and steps are well known in the art, and because they do not facilitate a better understanding of the present disclosure, a discussion of such elements and steps is not provided herein. Nevertheless, the disclosure herein is directed to all such variations and modifications to the disclosed elements and methods known to those skilled in the art.

[0027] Wireless power has become increasingly popular with the advent of an increasingly mobile society. Wireless power may at least partially untether devices that previously required plugging into a primary supply, and this untethering allows for use of these devices in a variety of heretofore unavailable settings. In fact, as wireless fidelity (“WiFi”), Bluetooth, cellular, near-field communications (“NFC”), and like wireless intercommunications have proliferated, it is still device power wiring that provides an impediment to true and complete mobility of devices. By way of non-limiting example, an electric frying pan, blender, pot, can opener, coffee maker, cooler, chiller, juicer, waffle or Panini iron, or the like would be appreciably easier to operate, handle and move, store, and clean without the presence of a wire for operative power. Moreover, rather than necessitating a particular space for each of the foregoing appliances, the use of wireless operative power for the aforementioned appliances could be conveniently made available in many locations throughout a kitchen, dining room, living room, or retail food setting, such on countertops, table tops, standalones, on board corded-appliances, or on cooktops having integrated inductive power sources.

[0028] Wireless power, in general, may be considered in two basic categories, namely wireless charging and wireless operative power. Wireless charging is typically a low-power operation, on the order of 10 W or less, such as more particularly in the range of about 5 W or less, and may be provided through inductive (i.e., magnetic field) wireless charging, although some efforts have been made to provide such charging using radio frequency (“RF”) techniques. Operative power demands are often much more significant than those power demands for wireless or wired charging, such as recharging or so-called “trickle charging.” For example, operative power requirements may vary from the 100 W range for small appliances to the 1-3 kW range for more significant movable appliances, such as those movable appliances that require significant heating for operation.

[0029] Nevertheless, even these more significant operative power requirements may be wirelessly provided using inductive coupling. For example, some modern kitchens are equipped with a stovetop having an induction system that conveys energy to a cooking utensil with a high magnetic permeability, such as a steel saucepan. An induction coil generates a strong oscillating magnetic

field, which induces eddy currents in the utensil that heat it enough to cook with. However, it has been theorized that such an induction element may be used to inductively provide power to a kitchen appliance such as a blender, mixer, or the like, instead of requiring that the appliance be plugged into the main power supply. In such exemplary instances, the power available for inductive transfer to meet the more significant operative power demands of an inductive secondary coil placed in proximity to the primary coil is limited by the power supply voltage. For example, the maximum available inductive power using presently known techniques is typically on the order of 1.5 kW at 100V, and is on the order of 4.5 kW at 250V.

[0030] Further, known techniques for wireless charging oftentimes do not necessitate an indication of the presence of a device to activate, in part due to the less significant nature of the magnetically-induced power provided for charging power, as compared to operative power. However, in an operative power embodiment, the amount of power, because it is variable and may be significant in accordance with the device to be operated, should be known and monitored during operation.

[0031] Suggested solutions to indicate presence for the inductive provision of operative power include static presence detection, RF feedback and switching (such as at 27 MHz), Bluetooth feedback and switching, visible light switching, and NFC feedback and switching. However, each of the immediately foregoing solutions, if used alone, may suffer from drawbacks, such as cost, measurement tolerance, suitability for use in certain embodiments, consistency of operation, interference from the inductive power system, etc. Moreover, the foregoing methods, when used alone, may lack suitability to provide continuous feedback and refined control of the specific power requirements for particular powered devices.

[0032] The present disclosure includes an apparatus, system and method for providing, monitoring and controlling wireless power. The present disclosure may provide: trickle charging and/or battery recharging, such as for battery operated kitchen appliances; power conversion; and/or operative power to any device or appliance, such as blenders, toasters and toaster ovens, coffee makers, mobile/cellular devices, laptops, frying pans, pots, can openers, grills, hibachis, coolers, chillers, juicers, fondue pots, cooktops, pizza ovens, waffle or Panini irons, or the like. The availability of wireless power according to the disclosed exemplary embodiments may eliminate clutter in kitchens, dining rooms, conference rooms (i.e., using wireless laptop charging power or computer monitor operative power from a conference table), and the like, may save significant space in these and other areas, and may make far easier the cleaning and storage of appliances, etc. For example, a cordless appliance may, in certain instances and in addition to receiving wireless operative and/or recharging power, be completely or partially sealed and/or otherwise waterproofed, thereby making cleaning of the appliance in one or few pieces much easier than in the known art.

[0033] Wireless power for the aforementioned charging, power conversion, or operation may be conveniently provided, such as using induction, on any surface or device suitable to provide feedback electronics and inductive power, and/or suitable to provide inductive power and interfacing electronics for interfacing with feedback at least partially provided by the device that receives the wirelessly provided power. Such housings for primary, or “wired,” power may include, but are not limited to, countertops, table tops, standalones, corded-appliances, or inductive cooktops. Of course, those skilled in the art will appreciate, in light of the discussion herein, that the power (such as from a mains supply) that powers a primary inductive coil, as used herein, may also be provided by a battery or other suitable power source (such as car, camper, boat, or similar batteries, by way of non-limiting example).

[0034] FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram illustrating the exemplary generation of power in a secondary coil **10**. In the illustration, current is generated in the secondary **10** due to a magnetic field caused by current flowing in the primary coil **12**. In the illustration, an isolation barrier **14** is present between the primary **12** and secondary **10**. In certain embodiments, the isolation barrier **14** may be, for example, the glass atop an inductive cooktop.

[0035] Dependent upon the wired power available to the primary **12**, the wireless induction power

provided to the secondary **10** in the disclosed embodiments may be in the range of less than 10 W, such as 1-5 W, to greater than 4 kW. Due to the wide variation in the range of power provided in the described embodiments, provided herein are feedback electronics and techniques to monitor and/or control the need for power (i.e., the presence of a device), the amount of power (which may be variable based on the device present), the timing of the providing of power, and various like and related factors that will be understood to those skilled in the art in light of the instant disclosure.

[0036] By way of non-limiting example, the present disclosure provides an exemplary infrared (“IR”) feedback system and method, which may be employed in conjunction with inductive energy transfer. Those skilled in the art will appreciate, in light of the disclosure set forth herein, that ones of the described feedback systems may be employed in a wireless power embodiment, or may be employed in wired power embodiments to provide power feedback for devices/appliances. Thus, the power provided to the secondary **10** by the primary **12** may be the result of feedback provided by a paired infrared transmission and detection system. In particular embodiments, IR transmitters may reside in a powered device/appliance, and IR detectors may reside in the housing in which the primary coil is present. An exemplary paired system of infrared transmitter diodes **330** and infrared detection diodes **316** is shown in FIG. 2.

[0037] In an exemplary embodiment of infrared feedback in a wireless power embodiment, a feedback signal **220** is generated using infrared photodiodes and detectors **330/316** to control inductive energy transfer from primary **12** to secondary **10**. Of course, as those skilled in the art will appreciate from the disclosure herein, feedback may also include, discretely or in combination with the aforementioned infrared feedback, indicator signals and/or feedback from or using NFC, RF (such as 900 MHz or 27 MHz), visible light, wires communicatively interconnecting primary and secondary control systems, and combinations thereof. It may be preferable to at least partially electrically isolate particular ones of the foregoing feedback systems (other than infrared) from the inductive power generation, such as in order to avoid interference and ensure proper operation. Infrared feedback may be particularly advantageous to provide feedback in particular wireless power embodiments, at least because infrared feedback will typically not require the aforementioned electrical isolation from the inductive power generation discussed herein.

[0038] More specifically, in an exemplary embodiment implemented using infrared feedback, an infrared transmitting diode **330** or diodes may be paired with an infrared detecting diode or diodes (such as in a one to one, one to many, many to one, or many to many configuration) to produce a feedback signal from the transmitting to the receiving diode or diodes, thus providing a closed electronic feedback loop for controlling the power produced in the secondary of an inductive energy transfer system. This embodiment allows the mechanically and electrically isolated control electronics of the secondary of the inductive energy transfer system to communicate with the control electronics of the primary of the system. Accordingly, if a particular power level is required at the secondary, the control electronics in the secondary may provide a signal to the control electronics of the primary via the infrared diodes to modify the power level that is being inductively transmitted.

[0039] In embodiments, the primary **12** and secondary **10** coils of the inductive energy transfer system are in close proximity to one other, but are mechanically and electrically isolated from one other. This isolation may be provided, for example, by a glass isolator of an inductive cooktop. Thereby, the presently disclosed embodiments may allow refined power control of the device that is receiving the induction energy transfer. This power is provided in a substantially noise free manner, and via the isolation boundary. Additionally, ones of the embodiments of the disclosure are highly configurable, and yet further may be very inexpensive beyond the typical base cost of an individual appliance.

[0040] In inductive energy transfer, the primary may operate as would an open air coil absent the presence of the secondary, hence delivering little to virtually no magnetic field. Embodiments readily allow for the use of infrared to indicate not only the presence of a device, thereby indicating

the need to drive the secondary, but further to indicate the specific power requirements of the device. These power requirements may be modified in a typical manner, such as through the use of manual controls (i.e., using a potentiometer-type knob adjustment) on the device/appliance itself, wherein manual adjustment to the device controls on the device cause modification of the infrared signal indicative of the state of the secondary. Of course, such manual controls may also be located on the unit that houses the primary. In accordance with this modified feedback, the primary may increase or decrease the power delivery to the secondary. Likewise, control signals indicated via the infrared feedback may include on/off, faster/slower, more/less, hotter/colder, timing, etc.

[0041] In accordance with such control and feedback, simplified, or more complex, handshaking may be performed. That is, limitations may be placed on the type of device/appliance having a secondary that is accepted for interaction with the primary, and/or handshaking may allow for the exchange of information between the device/appliance and, for example, a cooktop housing the primary. For example, only appliances that are compatible with or that have the same branding as a cooktop that houses the primary may interoperate with the primary. Needless to say, those skilled in the art will appreciate in light of the instant disclosure that, in other embodiments, all or certain brands or models may also interoperate. Interoperability may be indicated on packing, on physical units, or the like.

[0042] Of course, as the housing of the primary often includes microprocessing capabilities, inclusion of a microprocessor in the device including the secondary may allow for more complex handshaking, information encoding, and the like. Such more complex handshaking may also occur over, for example, the aforementioned infrared transmission/detection, or may include, for example, other data exchange means. Data exchange means may include NFC, RF, visible light, and wired (such as RCA jack in the primary) or proprietary wired connections.

[0043] FIG. 3 is a diagrammatic illustration of a kitchen appliance **206**, i.e., a blender, resident upon a primary coil housing **208**, i.e., a cooktop, that includes a primary coil **12** for providing inductive power. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 3 is illustrative only, and does not limit the applicable scope of the description herein. For example, the appliance **206** as shown may comprise any appliance or device in need of operative power, charging, recharging, or power conversion, and may include a base **210** or no base, wherein such a base **210** may or may not include an infrared or other feedback mechanism, and/or may or may not include a secondary **10**. That is, the secondary **10** may be resident within the device or appliance **206**, or within the device base **210**. By way of non-limiting example, appliance **206** may be a blender, coffee maker, cellular device, battery operated device, a device having a non-nationally compliant plug, a cooktop, a pizza oven, etc.

[0044] Base **210**, where present, may be permanently or temporarily connected or connectable to device **206**. Further, base **210** may be dedicated for a particular device, or may be universal or semi-universal in that base **210** may interoperate with multiple different devices **206**. Moreover, base **210** may itself, once powered by secondary **10**, serve to provide one or more “plug-in” power outlets for other appliances or devices not capable of, or not desired for, receiving wireless power. The wired one or more plugs provided in base **210** in such embodiments may be standard plugs, or may be proprietary plugs, and/or may allow readily for use of multiple different types of plugs therein.

[0045] In the illustration, power provided from the primary and induced in the secondary is controlled by the infrared feedback system **220**. The infrared feedback system **220** may provide signaling, as indicated by a controller for the secondary, to the controller for the primary. This signaling may provide simplistic handshaking, such as on/off, higher/lower, hotter/colder, or more complex handshaking, such as might be indicated by inclusion of appliance **206** and/or housing **208** in the Internet-of-things (“IoT”). This handshaking signaling may be provided in any form known to those skilled in the art, such as modifications to pulse width, frequency, amplitude, or the like, of the outgoing IR signaling **330**. This handshaking may be performed, at least in part, via one or

more microprocessors in communication with, or within, feedback system **220**, which microprocessor(s) may reside in either or both of the appliance **206** and the housing **208**. Further, the signaling may be directly indicative of the power received by or requested at the secondary coil. By way of non-limiting example, an IR signaling that is indicative of the rectified received power at the secondary coil is shown in FIG. **4**. The IR system may include sufficient modifications to allow for consistent signaling notwithstanding movement of appliance **206**, such as sufficient view fields by the IR detector diodes **316**, sufficient send angle for IR photodiodes **330**, optics resident in appliance **206**, optics resident in housing **208**, and like modifications.

[0046] Moreover, it will be understood that the interoperation of the feedback system **220** with respect to IR diode(s) **330** and IR detector(s) **316** may be independent of the location of either IR diode **330** or IR detector **316** in relation to coils **10**, **12**. This is, in part, due to the fact that the IR diode/detector **330/316** does not generally suffer from interference due to interoperation of the inductive coils **10,12**. Additionally, multiple secondary coils **10** may reside within appliance **206** and/or base **210**, such as for interoperation with one or more primaries **12**.

[0047] It will be appreciated that housing **208** may be or include nearly any surface suitable for inclusion of primary coil **12**. By way of non-limiting example, housing **208** may be or include a countertop, a cooktop, a table, or the like. Further, any housing may include one or more primary coils **12** in portions or along the entirety thereof, preferably with sufficient space therebetween to allow for discrete operation of appliances **206** on individual ones of the coils. Moreover, housing **208** may or may not include thereon visual indicia **230** indicating the presence of primary coils therein, or indicating the precise or approximate location of primary coils therein. As inductive power may be moisture resistant/proof and condition agnostic, housing **208** need not include waterproofing, weatherproofing, or the like in order to protect the inductive power system—although such protections may be provided.

[0048] FIG. **5** is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary system in accordance with the disclosure. As illustrated, the primary coil **12** receives “wired” power **306** (which may be rectified **308**, or otherwise filtered or modified **308**) in accordance with a frequency indicated by resonant converter **310**. Resonant converter **310** may be controlled by controller **314** according to IR signaling received at IR receiving diodes **316**. Controller **314** may be or be included as part of a microprocessor controller system within the housing of the primary **12**.

[0049] Secondary coil **10** has induced therein power responsive to the current in primary coil **12**. This power may be rectified **324** and provided as operative/charging power to device **206**.

Additionally, after processing **324** (such as rectification **324**) or without processing, and with or without provision to a device controller **325**, an indication of the power received may be provided to IR transmitting diodes **330** for feedback signaling to IR receiving diodes **316**. Once received, this IR signaling may cause modification to the power to primary **12**, which may, in turn, cause modification to the power induced at secondary **10** and passed to device **206**.

[0050] Those skilled in the art will appreciate that processing and filtering of the power provided or induced, and hence of the electronics resident in appliance **206**, for example, may vary based on the needs of the device or based on devices to be operated. For example, certain devices may require AC power, certain may require DC power, and some may operate with either AC or DC, and signal processing electronics may vary accordingly and still fall within the spirit and scope of the disclosure.

[0051] FIG. **6** is an exemplary illustration of an appliance having therein a secondary **10**, IR transmitting diodes **330**, and a device controller **406**. Device controller **406** may specifically be or include, for example, IR transmitting diode controller **408**.

[0052] Diode controller **408** may include, for example, a comparator **410** that assesses the received power at secondary **10**. In exemplary embodiments, this received power may be directly taken from secondary **10**. In other exemplary embodiments, device **206** may include one or more housekeeping coils **412** which may, for example, receive power from primary only as a percentage of the power

induced in secondary, i.e., housekeeping coil **412** may include fewer windings, such as **4** windings, than secondary **10**, but may be placed along with secondary **10** in the presence of primary **12** in order to have induced therein a current indicative of the current produced in secondary **10**. The housekeeping coils **412** may, in fact, be provided simply as additional windings of the secondary **10**.

[0053] FIGS. 7A and 7B provide a detailed schematic illustration of a particular exemplary embodiment of the disclosure. Illustrated in FIG. 7A are a secondary winding **10** and a housekeeping winding **412**. Also illustrated is the IR feedback loop **480**, which drives a plurality of IR photodiodes **330**. FIG. 7B illustrates a particular secondary winding **10**, housekeeping winding **412**, and IR photodiode **330** configuration suitable for use in an exemplary blender **206** embodiment. Further illustrated is a potentiometer **482** suitable for adjusting the power to secondary **10**.

[0054] FIGS. 8A, 8B and 8C are schematic diagrams illustrating driver circuitry for an exemplary primary **12**. In the illustration, primary **12** is driven responsive to received input at IR detector diodes **316**. IR detector diodes **316** may receive input from IR photodiodes **330**, and may accordingly modify the power at primary **12**. Accordingly, the power at secondary **10** is modified based upon the modification at primary **12**.

[0055] Returning now to FIG. 6, the indication of power produced at secondary **10** may then be provided to diode controller **408**. Diode controller **408** may indicate, for IR signaling purposes by IR transmitters **330**, that the power at primary **12** be modified. This will, in turn, modify the power at secondary **10**. That is, diode controller **408** may receive the indication of the power at secondary **10**, and, to the extent the power is not that which is desired, or to the extent the desired power for the device **206** has been modified (such as via adjustment to a manual controller), diode controller will vary the signal sent by IR transmitting diodes **330**.

[0056] Thus, power feedback may allow for any needed modification to supplied power. This enables refined control of supplied power, and accordingly the disclosed embodiments may allow for trickle charging of a cellular device (on the order of ~10 W or less delivered) as well as or in place of the provision of operative power (on the order of up to 4.5 kW delivered). The need to modify supplied power may include the presence of an appliance and the consequent need to supply power to secondary **10**. That is, in the same manner in which a conventional conductive cooktop may provide a small amount of power at the primary **12** in order to detect presence of an appliance (i.e., the primary acts as an air core inductor and thereby provides on the order of 0.25 A at 100 kHz, but the presence of a pan, for example, modifies the inductance of the circuit, hence changing the frequency and causing delivery of on the order of 1.5 A), the present disclosure may provide a small amount of power at the primary **12** sufficient to stimulate the IR transmitting diodes **330** in appliance **206** in order to detect the presence of appliance **206** and the consequent need to drive secondary **10**. Similarly, this small amount of primary current may induce sufficient current feedback in the housekeeping coil **412** to stimulate the device **206** to demand more power, such as via transmitting diodes **330**. Of course, those skilled in the art will appreciate that suitable safety electronics, such as one or more thermistors, may be present in the housing to ensure no overheating or misheating occurs.

[0057] Referring now to FIG. 9, a particular exemplary embodiment of an induction power supply system **500** is illustrated, and may include an induction work coil **510** and capacitor **520** that form a series resonant circuit. In an embodiment, the resonant circuit resonates at a high frequency, such as 30 kHz. The resonant circuit is energized from a controllable power source, VIN. In an embodiment, the primary coil **12** is part of a power unit **505** that has a non-magnetic work surface, such as a table with a wooden top, or a kitchen range with a cook top made of suitable nonmagnetic material, such as glass or ceramic, as discussed herein. Secondary coil **10** is placed in close proximity to the primary **12** and is energized by magnetic induction from the primary coil **12**. The primary coil and the secondary coil may be multi-turn (for example 30 turns) spirally wound

pancake coils. The primary may be mounted on the underside of a surface of the primary housing **208**, such as the aforementioned cooking top, onto which appliance **206**, such as an electric coffee maker, may be placed.

[0058] Secondary **10** may be mounted in the bottom of appliance **206**, or in base **210** to which appliance **206** may be coupled. Thereby, the appliance's secondary coil **12** is magnetically coupled to the primary coil **10**, and can provide power to operate the appliance using currents induced in the secondary.

[0059] Semiconductor switches **540** may form an oscillator. The oscillator is shown as a half bridge-type oscillator, although other types and/or configurations of oscillator may be used and the same general principles of operation will apply. The oscillator switches **540** and/or the input voltage VIN may be controlled by power controller **550**, such as in response to a feedback signal. The feedback signal may be provided by a signal transmitter, such as infrared LED **330**, to a signal receiver, such as infrared photodiode **316**. In the exemplary embodiment as shown, primary coil **12** and IR receiving photodiode **316** may be contained in housing **208**, and secondary coil **10** and LED **330** may be contained in assembly **206/210**. The LED and photodiode may be arranged so that the light from the LED shines more or less on the photodiode, although between the LED **330** and receiving photodiodes **316** may be optics or the like, such as in order to increase the view field of the IR feedback system and as discussed hereinabove.

[0060] In embodiments, an array containing a plurality of LEDs, such as six LEDs arranged in a regular hexagon, may be disposed on the bottom of the appliance, and a plurality of photodiodes similar in number and/or arrangement, may be optically exposed to the work surface under which the work coil is mounted, such as to better ensure that the signals sent by the LEDs are received by the photodiodes. In such a configuration, at least one, two, or more LEDs may be required as visible to receiving photodiodes. Additionally, either or both of IR diode(s) **330** and IR detector(s) **330** may be placed anywhere within the view field of one another, including within and/or within the field of coils **10/12**. Further, in embodiments having an array in the IR feedback system, a one-to-one correspondence to enable operation may or may not be required.

[0061] In the exemplary embodiment, the semiconductor switches **540** are coupled to power controller **550**. Although other arrangements may be used, as shown the gate electrodes of the switches are coupled directly to the power controller, the drain of the top switch is connected to VIN; the top switch's source is coupled to the bottom switch's drain, and the bottom switch's source is coupled to ground.

[0062] In a series resonant circuit, current is maximum at resonance and therefore the resonant circuit is preferably operated proximate to resonance by the power controller. To transfer energy from the primary coil to the appliance coil, high frequency oscillations of the magnetic field set up by the substantially resonating primary coil **12** induce currents in the appliance coil **10**, thereby providing power to the appliance coupled thereto. The power to the appliance is controlled by varying the primary coil frequency. Control of the primary coil **12** current, and hence the appliance coil **10** current, may be effected by power controller **550** varying the frequency of the oscillator.

[0063] Control of the frequency and magnitude of the voltage applied to the appliance may be effected by using a full wave rectifier (not shown) to produce DC from the high frequency AC induced in the appliance coil, and an AC inverter (not shown) coupled to the rectifier. The output of the appliance coil may be full wave rectified and fed through the inverter to produce a sine wave. The sine wave may be amplitude controlled in any appropriate manner, for example, from 85 VAC to 265 VAC. However, the output power is limited by the capability of the primary coil **12**. The output frequency provided by the appliance controller may be adjusted to match the mains frequency, which may be the frequency of the voltage to the circuit that produces the VIN.

[0064] Appliance controller **570** determines the level of energy needed to satisfy the requirements of the controls of the appliance (not shown). The appliance controls may be disposed on the appliance, or may be otherwise disposed, such as on an appliance base that contains the appliance

coil, or on the working surface containing the work coil. In an embodiment, the appliance controller activates the infrared LEDs and sends data that is received by the photodiodes and forwarded to power controller **550**. The power controller uses the received information to modify the energy supplied to the system to conform to the requirements of the appliance controls, for example, by varying the duty cycle and/or the frequency of the current supplied to the primary coil **12** in response to the commands of the appliance controller.

[0065] In embodiments, the data sent using signaling by the infrared diodes may be related to PWM data to control the duty cycle of the oscillator, frequency data to control the frequency of the oscillator or inverter, and the like. The data may be sent in standard packets so that appliances and working surfaces/coils providing power may be made by different manufacturers. Alternatively, the data may be sent in proprietary packets to ensure a single manufacturer produces both the appliances and the working surfaces/coils. For example, various packet structures and lengths may be used, such as 8 bit or 32 bit packets. Moreover, machine intelligence may be provided in the system to coordinate the operation of the power controller **550** and the appliance controller **570**.

[0066] FIG. **10** is a block signaling diagram indicating exemplary signaling by IR transmitting diodes **330**. This signaling may, for example, be the modified signaling provided upon sensing of a change by the diode controller **408** of FIG. **6**. As shown, comparator **410** may compare the received power to the desired power, and may operate the IR transmitting diodes **330** as a ripple converter. That is, provided may be a “ripple control,” wherein IR diodes may be activated when power is insufficient at secondary coil **10**, and accordingly power may increase, and the IR diodes may be deactivated when power is overly sufficient, and accordingly power may decrease—thereby creating a “ripple” of the power produced at secondary **10** around the desired voltage. More particularly, the comparator **410** may assess the power at secondary **10**, and may turn on, or pulse for a pulse duration, transmitter diodes **330** when the power at secondary **10** is insufficient, and may turn off transmitter diodes **330** when the power at secondary **10** is sufficient. The periodicity of the IR signaling may synchronize with the received power, such as with the 60 Hz signal of the induced power at secondary **10** if the wired power at primary **12** is provided at 60 Hz.

[0067] Accordingly, the devices, systems and method provided by the instant disclosure may be independent of supplied frequency and other electrical supply factors. Thereby, devices, systems and methods provided herein may be “universal” in that they are readily transferrable between environments and countries. This would, of course, allow for construction and manufacturing of devices for use in the instant disclosed embodiments without need for modification (such as different plugs) for different markets.

[0068] Moreover, the signaling indicated herein, such as that of FIG. **10**, may be encoded, such as by device controller (**406**)? doesn't show up on FIG. **10**. By way of non-limiting example, device controller **406** may encode or otherwise modify IR (and other) signaling in order to avoid interference with other IR-based control systems, such as television remote controls, that may share the environment with the disclosed inventive embodiments.

[0069] FIG. **11** illustrates an example of a specific driver circuit **502** for a primary **12**. The driver circuit as shown includes a full bridge **504**. The circuit **502** is an example of a driver circuit that allows primary **12** to run higher than resonance, in order to allow persistent power flow through primary **12**.

[0070] FIG. **12** is a block diagram illustrating device controller **406**, and primary housing controller **314**. As illustrated, either or both controllers **314**, **406** may optionally interoperate with non-IR feedback systems. By way of non-limiting example, either or both controllers may include wireless communication capabilities **960**, such as using RF, Bluetooth, IR, WiFi, NFC, or similar communication methodologies **499**. Likewise, to the extent the wireless communication capabilities are resident only in the housing associated with one of the controllers **314**, **406**, such as within the primary housing, a wire, plug, or the like may allow for communication between controllers **314**, **406** to thereby allow for wireless communication by the device not including the

wireless communication capability therewithin.

[0071] Capabilities **960** may thus allow for detailed handshaking and data exchange between device **206** and housing **208**. As such, communications using capabilities **960** may be packetized, encoded, or the like. The wireless communication capabilities may also allow for information to pass not only between device **206** and housing **208**, but further may allow for information and data to pass between device **206** and housing **208** and the environment associated therewith. By way of example, capabilities **960** may allow for communication with a local area network (LAN) or wide area network (WAN) interconnected with the Internet, an intranet, an extranet, the cellular network, a satellite, or the like. This may allow, for example, for “membership” of the device **206** and/or the housing in the IoT.

[0072] For example, housing **208** may include network communication capabilities. In such a case, if appliance **206** does not include networking capabilities (or is unable to use such capabilities, if present), appliance **206** may communicate, via the feedback discussed herein, with the control electronics for housing **208**, thereby accessing networking capabilities via the networking capabilities of housing **208** under control of the microprocessing capabilities therewithin.

[0073] Communicative connection to the IoT may allow, for example, for remote, timed, or like actuation of devices **206** physically adjacent to housing **208**. Similarly, use-tracking may be performed, such as assessing, for example, that an owner uses a certain brand of blender **3** times each week. Additionally, recipes may be practiced via download to a device (and may or may not include sensing of ingredient additions), and/or other devices may be actuated based on use of a first device (i.e., an oven may be turned on to preheat while a cake batter is being blended in a blender). As such, participation in the IoT may allow for combination cooking (i.e., a mixer within a pot), and/or may allow for interoperation of wireless devices **206** in accordance with this disclosure with other wired or wireless devices that do not operate in the inductive and feedback systems and methods discussed herein.

[0074] Reference is made throughout to microprocessor-based control, and, in some embodiments, microprocessor-based network communication. FIG. **13** is a simplified functional block diagram of a microprocessor-based system **2000**, which may be referred to herein as simply a microprocessor. The functional descriptions herein indicated as microprocessor-based may be implemented in hardware, software or some combination thereof. For example, the controller resident in housing **208** may be implemented using a microprocessor-based system.

[0075] As shown, the system **2000** may include a processor **2002**, a memory system **2004** and one or more input/output (I/O) devices **2006**, communicatively connected by a communication ‘fabric’. The communication fabric can be implemented in a variety of ways, and may include one or more computer buses **2008**, **2010**, and/or bridge and/or router devices **2012**. The I/O devices **2006** may include network adapters and/or mass storage devices from which the microprocessor system **2000** may send and receive data for generating and transmitting information, including transmission and reception via a network interface I/O. That is, system **2000** may be in communication with the Internet via the I/O devices **2006**.

[0076] The various illustrative logics, logical blocks, “microprocessing,” and modules described in connection with the embodiments herein may be implemented or performed with a general purpose processor, a digital signal processor (DSP), an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), a field programmable gate array (FPGA) or other programmable logic device, discrete gate or transistor logic, discrete hardware components, or any combination thereof designed to perform the functions described herein. A general-purpose processor may be a microprocessor, but, in the alternative, the processor may be any conventional processor, controller, microcontroller, or state machine. A processor may also be implemented as a combination of computing devices, e.g., a combination of a DSP and a microprocessor, a plurality of microprocessors, one or more microprocessors in conjunction with a DSP core, or any other such configuration.

[0077] Further, the steps and/or actions of methods, logic, or algorithms described in connection

with the aspects disclosed herein may be embodied directly in hardware, in a software module executed by a processor, or in a combination of the two. A software module may reside in RAM memory, flash memory, ROM memory, EPROM memory, EEPROM memory, registers, a hard disk, a removable disk, a CD-ROM, or any other form of storage medium known in the art. An exemplary storage medium may be coupled to the processor, such that the processor can read information from, and write information to, the storage medium. In the alternative, the storage medium may be integral to the processor. Further, in some aspects, the processor and the storage medium may reside in an ASIC. Additionally, the ASIC may reside in a user terminal. In the alternative, the processor and the storage medium may reside as discrete components in a user terminal. Additionally, in some aspects, the steps and/or actions of a method or algorithm may reside as one or any combination or set of instructions on a machine readable medium and/or computer readable medium.

[0078] The previous description of the disclosure is provided to enable any person skilled in the art to make or use the disclosure. Various modifications to the disclosure will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the generic principles defined herein may be applied to other variations without departing from the spirit or scope of the disclosure. Thus, the disclosure is not intended to be limited to the examples and designs described herein, but rather is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and novel features disclosed.

Claims

1. A system for operating a battery-less appliance necessitating operating power in a range of about 1 kW to about 4.5 kW, comprising: a secondary coil associated with the appliance and suitable for providing induced operative alternating current in the appliance when the appliance is electrically and mechanically isolated from, but is in magnetic proximity to, a primary coil circuit; a housekeeping coil proximate to the secondary coil, and in magnetic communication with the primary coil such that induced current in the housekeeping coil is indicative of a power insufficiency in the secondary coil to provide the induced operating alternating current; the appliance controller coupled to the secondary coil, which is suitable to locally receive from a remote source, waveform characteristics of a current waveform of the operative alternating current situationally required by the appliance, the appliance controller being suitable to generate data indicators, the data indicators including at least induced current in the housekeeping coil as a percentage of the operating alternating current in the secondary coil, for the induction of the operative alternating current; and a data exchange system communicatively coupled to the appliance and configured to operate the primary coil to produce the current waveform having the waveform characteristics for the operative current in the secondary coil.
2. The system of claim 1, further comprising a secondary sensor communicatively coupled to the appliance controller and suitable to transmit other ones of the data indicators.
3. The system of claim 2, wherein the secondary sensor comprises one of a static presence indicator, radio frequency switch, wired switch, Bluetooth switch, visible light switch, and NFC switch.
4. The system of claim 1, wherein the appliance controller further comprises a safe operation detector suitable to monitor the operative current.
5. The system of claim 1, wherein the current waveform of the operative current is indicative of at least one of minimum power, maximum power, speed, heat, timing, and display brightness of one or more aspects of the appliance.
6. The system of claim 5, wherein the appliance is one selected from the group consisting of a blender, toaster, coffee maker, networked device, display, pan, pot, can opener, grill, hibachi, cooler, chiller, juicer, cooktop, oven, and cooking iron.
7. The system of claim 1, wherein ones of the data indicators comprise performance feedback.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the housing comprises a base suitable for receiving the appliance.
9. The system of claim 8, wherein the base comprises a multi-prong plug receiver.
10. The system of claim 1, wherein ones of the data indicators comprise compatibility with the primary coil.
11. The system of claim 1, wherein the mechanical isolation comprises glass.
12. The system of claim 1, wherein the appliance is a member of an internet-of-things group.
13. The system of claim 1, wherein the primary coil controller comprises a full bridge driver circuit.
14. The system of claim 1, further comprising a feedback receiver within the housing, which is suitable to: receive feedback data regarding a secondary coil operative power waveform induced in the secondary coil responsively to the primary coil waveform; and modify the primary coil waveform responsively to the feedback data.
15. The system of claim 14, wherein the feedback data comprises presence indication.
16. The system of claim 14, wherein the feedback data comprises performance indication.
17. The system of claim 14, wherein the feedback data is indicative of at least one of minimum power, maximum power, speed, heat, timing, and display brightness of one or more aspects of the appliance,
18. The system of claim 1, wherein the housing comprises a cooktop.
19. The system of claim 1, wherein the data exchange system is communicatively coupled to the appliance controller and to at least one data receiver of the primary coil controller and suitable to wirelessly exchange ones of the data indicators between the appliance controller and the at least one data receiver.
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