



Handheld spectrometer

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## HANDHELD SCANNER ANALYZES THE CHEMICAL MAKEUP OF ANY PHYSICAL OBJECT

 SPORT & FITNESS

**SCIo enables users to collect information about any food, medicine, plant, or physical object simply by scanning.**

Some new inventions seem too good to be true, especially if the idea was first proposed in science fiction. Star Trek's tricorder — a handheld device that is able to scan any unknown object and deliver data and analysis about its composition — is one such device that is currently being made a reality. While the [Scanadu Scout](#) multi-sensor has already demonstrated similar functions to detect health problems in humans, the [SCIo](#) is a new device that enables users to collect information about any food, medicine, plant, or physical object simply by scanning.

Developed by Consumer Physics, SCiO is around the same size as a USB drive and contains an array of molecular sensors that use a method called near-infrared spectroscopy. Typically, machines used for this type of analysis are bulky, require cables and are expensive. Users simply press the SCiO against the material or object they want to scan for around two seconds. The device then sends the information via Bluetooth LE to iPhones and compatible Android handsets, displaying it in an easy to understand way through the companion app.

The SCiO app offers a number of preset functions, although the possibilities are numerous. Users can identify unlabeled medicines, get nutritional information about their food, analyze the quality of the soil their plants are growing in, or even find out if the avocado in their fruit bowl is ripe without opening it.

The potential for such a device is huge, which explains why it's already broken its Kickstarter goal by 800 percent, but also why consumers might have reservations about its accuracy until it's released to the public. Backers can still pre-order a SCiO for USD 199 if they pledge before 15 June. Are there other existing complex technologies that could be redesigned and repackaged for consumers?\

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Website: [www.consumerphysics.com](http://www.consumerphysics.com)

Contact: [www.twitter.com/my\\_scio](https://www.twitter.com/my_scio)