PUBLIC TRANSPORT BUS CAN BE CHARGED WIRELESSLY ON-THE-GO

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

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Although vehicles such as the lightweight Navia shuttle have shown the feasibility of electric vehicles as public transport, researchers at the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) have now developed the OLEV, an electric bus designed for mass transit that can be charged wirelessly, while stationary or moving.

Standing for Online Electric Vehicle, the idea for the OLEV was inspired by previous transportation devices such as commercial trams and shuttle buses created at KAIST. Where the trams use overhead power cables to run, a new route located in the city of Gumi in South Korea includes magnetic field resonance cables buried under the road surface. These cables are able to charge the batteries of the OLEV as it runs along the route through inductive charging. This means that the vehicle can travel along the 24-kilometer route without having to stop to be recharged, which in turn allows the developers to use a battery that is one-third of the size of those included in typical electric cars, reducing the weight of the vehicle.

The transport option was launched to the public in August and the team behind the OLEV want to introduce ten more buses by 2015. Could this idea provide the basis for more viable electricity-based public and private transport in the future?

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