

Fuel cells take another step toward reality

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Britain's Johnson Matthey and Polyfuel are teaming up to provide membranes for fuel cells for consumer electronics. Fuel cells harvest the energy from chemical reactions and then provide that energy (in the form of electrons) to devices. While some auto manufacturers believe they could one day put hydrogen fuel cells into cars, MP3 manufacturers and cell phone providers are looking at fuel cells that produce electrons by cracking methanol molecules. Cracking the molecules results in, among other byproducts, water and spare electrons.

[Polyfuel](#) specializes in a catalytic membrane that prompts the breakdown of methanol. Johnson will provide catalyst coated membranes (CCMs) and membrane electrode assemblies (MEAs)--components that essentially help PolyFuel's membrane do its job. Getting fuel cells to market is taking [more time than expected](#). While the basic technology works, the continued improvement in battery technology saps the motive for device makers to switch.

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