

The fundamental science and technology applications of triboelectric nanogenerators

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Triboelectric nanogenerators (TENGs) was invented in 2012, which is based on coupling of triboelectrification and electrostatic induction effects, which is the most effective approach for converting mechanical energy into electric power. TENG is playing a vitally important role in the distributed energy and self-powered systems, with applications in internet of things, environmental/infrastructural monitoring, medical science, environmental science and security. In this talk, we first present the physics mechanism of triboelectrification for general materials. Our model is extended to liquid-solid contact electrification, reviving the classical understanding about the formation of electric double layers. Secondly, the fundamental theory of the TENGs is explored based on expanded Maxwell equations for a mechano-driven system. We will present the applications of the TENGs for harvesting all kind mechanical energy that is available but wasted in our daily life, such as human motion, walking, vibration, mechanical triggering, rotating tire, wind, flowing water and more. Then, we will illustrate the networks based on triboelectric TENGs for harvesting ocean water wave energy, for exploring its possibility as a sustainable large-scale blue energy. Lastly, we will show that TENGs as self-powered sensors for actively detecting the static and dynamic processes arising from mechanical agitation using the voltage and current output signals.

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