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The Expiry Date

Are our phones approaching their expiry
after each software update?



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Since the first release on June 29, 2007, the iPhone has proven to become one of the world's top used mobile phone. With annual releases, introducing new spicks and specks, Apple finds itself maintaining popularity within a range of users. However, the topic of obsolescence within iPhones proves to raise many controversial questions on the brand's motive in terms of customer purchases.

When a product becomes outdated or no longer used/produced, it can be described **as obsolete**. There are 3 types of obsolescence: qualitative, psychological and technological. All in which effect many iPhone users.

Qualitative obsolescence means that the product has physical factors that may have an effect on its functionality, meaning that repairs may be limited, and the overall wear and tear of the product are short-lived (e.g. older generations of iPhones being slowed down after iOS updates)

Psychological obsolescence refers to products that seem to be outdated due to innovations on the product, introducing new

products or generations (e.g. as innovative, more attractive, models of iPhones are released, consumers look for negatives with their current device for reasoning to upgrade)

Technological obsolescence involves the additions or upgrades in a product to enhance its functionality, accumulating more appeal to the target market (e.g. older iPhones incapable of processing new technological changes involved in newer operating systems)

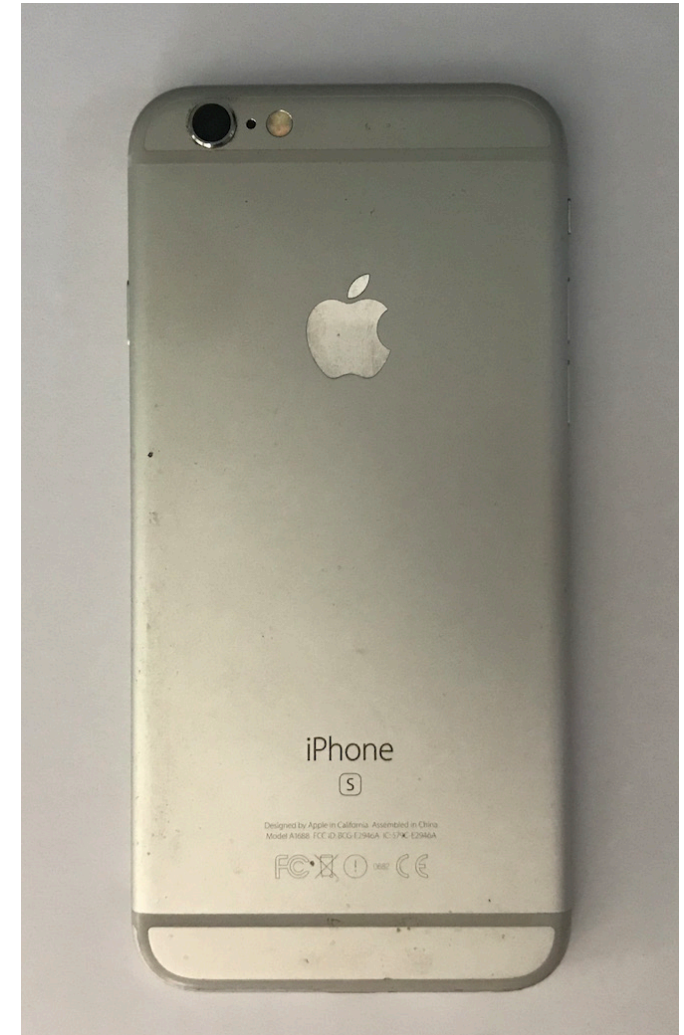
Last year, an investigation found that Apple were responsible for the decrease in performability within their older models through software updates. When doing so, Apple creates an implication to consumers that their current phone lacks the performability that newer models possess. When observing data from Google searches of the term "iPhone slow," there is a peak of searches every year since 2008, each occurring after the release of a new iPhone. This may be the reason why consumers continuously purchase brand-new iPhones,

ultimately meaning that the company are guaranteed to have more sales.

This issue seems to extend to sustainability problems as more Apple smartphones are adding up the numbers of e-waste produced as the demand for upgrades in iPhones increases. Due to the shortened lifespan of these smartphones, many users are forced to throw out their old products when upgrading. As a result, there is a rise for mining of rare earth minerals (REMs) to produce more products within the iPhone line due to the growing demand for faster performance rates and longevity of battery life. Other consequences are increase of product turnover, shipping costs and fuel usage. A survey was conducted to question if iPhone users were aware of Apple's program to recycle their devices. Many were unaware, meaning that a large amount of people are uneducated on the idea of recycling old phones correctly, further explaining the negative effects the environment experiences due to our technological devices.

Apple has since been fined for their involvement in purposely slowing down older models of their product, additionally, they have acknowledged their intent to slow down iPhones through these software updates, however, claims of shortening the life of the devices were denied. Apple has provided consumers with solutions and tips for iPhone maintenance. These are: the reduction of the cost of battery replacements, information of battery health accessible on iOS, and user capability to turn off the slowing down of the processor in their device.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the obsolescence of iPhones proves to be an impeding enemy of many Apple users. Facing all types of obsolescence, consumers are continuously being blindly encouraged into purchasing more products within unnecessarily short periods of time, resulting in negative effects on the environment. However, regardless of these claims, Apple proves to maintain a high reputation with steady sales upon release of new products.



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Frequency of iPhone upgrades

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