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Who Owns Your Device?

Do you really own your device if Apple discourages 3rd party repair? How does this impact the Right to Repair community?



What is Right to Repair?

Joseph Campbell and Ned Layton

"It is about building products that can be easily disassembled, that can be opened up, the spare parts are available, and then take standard tools to repair them," - Shane Rattenbury, Australian minister of Consumer Affairs

The **Right to Repair** movement refers to a government legislation that allows consumers to repair and modify their electronics devices, without the need for services from the manufacturer. The Right to Repair movement gained traction back in 2016 when companies like Apple fought against such bills. The movement then gained traction from the farming industry where many farmers found that they could not legally repair their own equipment purchased from companies such as John Deere without the manufacturer's own repair services at a high cost.

Why does Right to Repair Exist?

The right to repair exists so the company in question, in this case Apple, holds total monopoly over a product. They have complete control over all aspects of the device. This way other businesses cannot profit off of Apples own devices. By holding the right to repair, Apple can also control their impact on e-waste, whether that be by cleanly disposing of leftover parts, or by hiding the negative impact they have. Additionally, by greatly inflating the price of repairs, Apple can incentivise customers to outright replace their phone instead, leading to a greater profit.

"The Right to Repair Act will provide consumers with the freedom to have their electronic products and appliances fixed by a repair shop or service provider of their choice, a practice that was taken for granted a generation ago but is now becoming increasingly rare in a world of planned obsolescence,."
- Susan Talamantes Eggman

What has Apple done about the right to repair?:

Apple has lobbied against the Right to Repair movement from the beginning of its existence. Apple argued by telling lawmakers that consumers could hurt themselves attempting to repair their own devices. Apple claims that customers could potentially injure themselves by "accidentally puncturing the batteries in Apple devices" during attempted repairs. Over the course of many weeks in 2019, Apple representatives have been meeting with legislators in California with the aim of killing Right to Repair legislation that makes it easier for customers to repair their own electronics.

Apple has continually lobbied against the right to repair legislations across multiple states. The right to repair legislation would force companies like Apple to provide repair parts, tools and repair information to the public.

What would happen if Right to Repair didn't exist?:

Right to repair brings jobs, without it, the potential loss of jobs would devastate an economy surrounding repair. Private Company "ifixit" based in California promotes Right to Repair, by selling repair parts and publishes indepth online repair guides for popular consumer electronic gadgets. This allows for everyday products to be repaired and to create job specialising, which promotes jobs. By promoting user repair, this also as a byproduct, reduces e-waste as less products end up in landfill.

Conclusion:

The Right to Repair movement would greatly benefit the entire economy. Not only does it create job opportunities, it reduces e-waste sent to landfills. Right to repair exists to promote self repairing of electronics as well as easily accessible replacement parts without spending ludicrous amounts of money.

Apple willingly lobbies against the right to repair as they believe that customers will hurt themselves.

Right to repair as a whole will benefit the entire economy and the environment. Not only will it create jobs, it will also significantly reduce the amount of e-waste sent to landfills.

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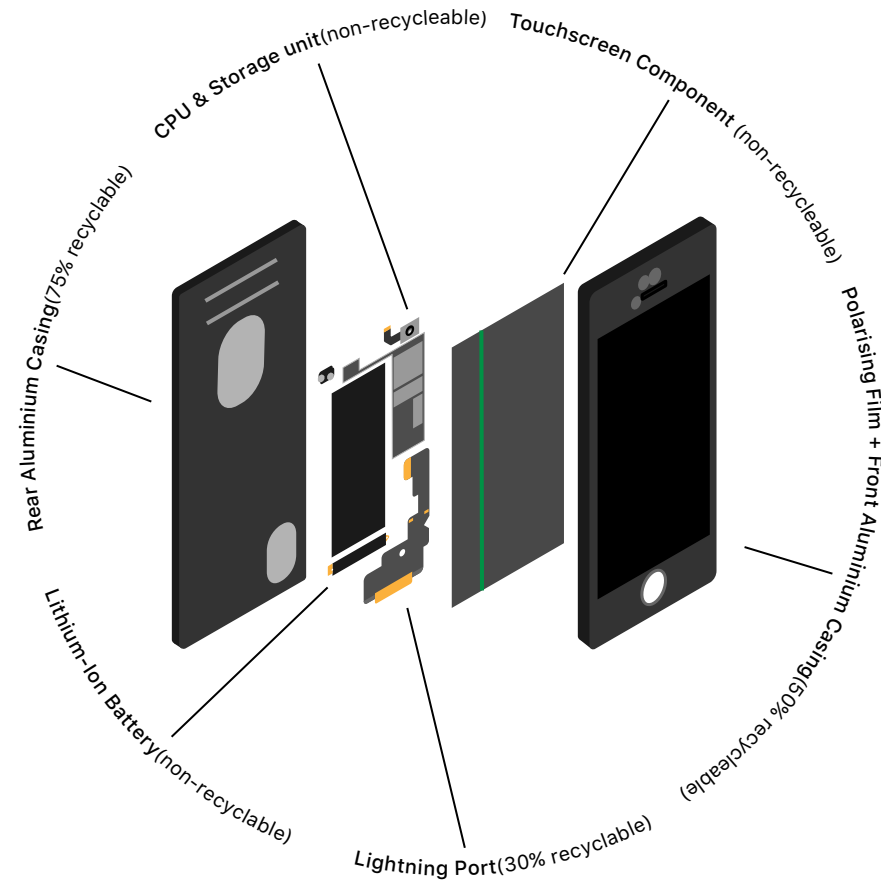
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