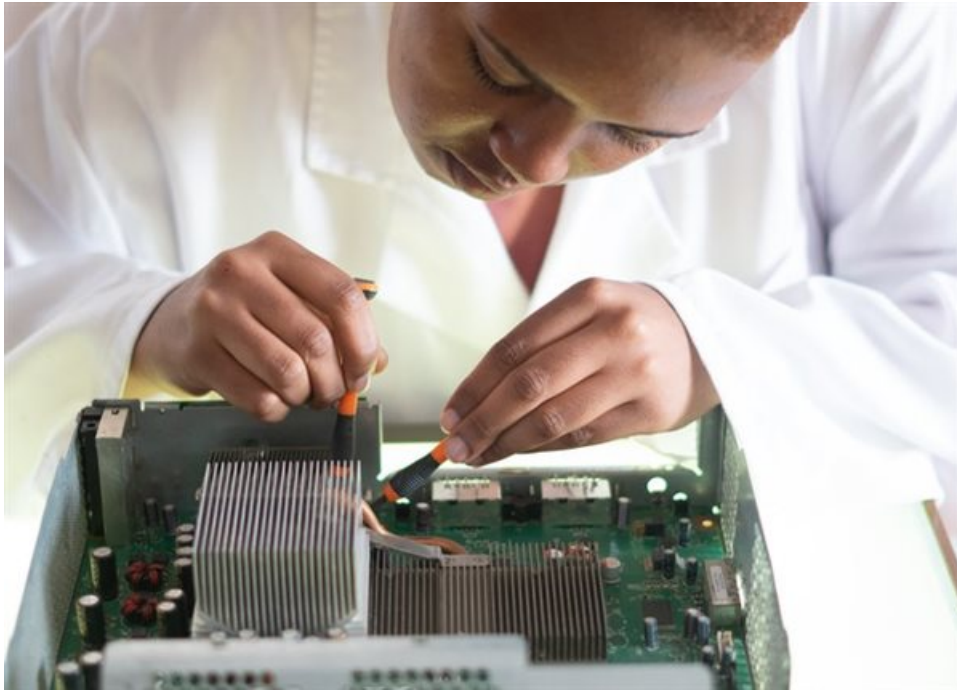


How Right to Repair can catalyse positive change in product life cycles

 By Jonathan Hurvitz

29 Sep 2021

Right to Repair is a movement that, simply, seeks to legally compel manufacturers to make spare parts of the products they produce available to the end user.



Source: Supplied

Most of the recent attention around the Right to Repair movement has centred around how it would allow vehicle-owners to have their new cars serviced or repaired at an independent provider of their choice, as opposed to being compelled to use the services of a prescribed dealership.

It is especially useful to consider the potential of Right to Repair in the context of consumers goods, such as appliances and electronics, and whether it can help to fight the scourge of “planned obsolescence”, a term used to describe a process whereby a product will become useless, out of date, or cease functioning effectively within a set period of time, so forcing the consumer to purchase a newer version.



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Just as with motor vehicles, in the appliance and consumer electronics space too we often find that items can only be repaired by the manufacturers themselves or their authorised dealers, usually at a premium. But, increasingly, customers are demanding transparency about how things are made, where they come from and, equally significant, where they end their life cycle.

Fundamentally, Right to Repair is asking that manufacturers share the information needed to make it possible for more people, such as independent agents, to service, repair and upgrade durable and semi-durable consumer goods such as

smartphones, fridges, microwaves and more.

Rethinking consumption habits

Right to Repair also presents an opportunity to rethink our consumption habits. It's well documented that the world's natural resources are under severe pressure and constantly exacerbated by increased production. The eight million metric tons of plastic that end up in the ocean every year is only one part of the problem. Tens of thousands of metric tons of consumer goods end up in landfills, often because we don't know how to fix or replace a minor part.

As such, Right to Repair has the potential to become an initiative that compels producers and manufacturers to design for longevity and easy maintenance.



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Right to Repair is gaining traction in the US and UK, with the European Commission recently announcing that it has plans to implement Right to Repair rules. Similarly, in New York the Fair Repair Act has passed the State's Senate, which means manufacturers can be compelled to make diagnostic and repair information about their products available.

Let's allow Right to Repair to be the catalyst that encourages us to rethink our relationship with consumer products, so that we can better optimise their lifespan.

ABOUT JONATHAN HURVITZ

Jonathan Hurvitz is the CEO at Teljoy.

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