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Apple, Google, and Microsoft devices flunk repairability scores

Article

The news: Products made by **Apple, Google, and Microsoft** are less repair friendly than those made by competitors, according to a report from the **US Research Interest Group's Education Fund**.

What this means: The difficulty and expense involved in repairing devices from Apple, Google, and Microsoft undermines these companies' wider environmental aspirations and

challenges global right-to-repair legislation, per The Verge.

- Apple, Google, and Microsoft constantly highlight goals like achieving net-zero emissions or carbon neutrality.
- But the smartphones, tablets, laptops, desktops, and accessories they make are notoriously difficult to repair and often need to be replaced instead of fixed.
- The **US PIRG**, which grades companies on how easy it is to repair their devices, dinged the three Big Tech companies for poor repairability scores. Apple received the worst grades: MacBook models averaged 3.16 out of 10 points, and iPhones got 2.75 out of 10.
- In contrast, products from **Dell**, **Asus**, and **Motorola** averaged 7.81 points out of 10 for laptops, and 18 of Motorola's smartphones averaged 7.77 out of 10, proving that it is possible to design and build repairable devices.

The problem: Thinner, lighter devices make it impossible to easily swap out batteries, keyboards, or faulty components, which leads to higher repair costs and more e-waste in landfills.

- The technology industry produces various devices like smartphones, laptops, and wireless headphones that are designed to be disposable.
- While Big Tech companies race to net-zero in their offices and production facilities, the burden and cost of their products' poor repairability are passed on to consumers and third-party repair technicians.
- Governments are pushing back as right-to-repair becomes a consumer rights issue: France grades products in a "repairability index," and half of all US states have introduced right-to-repair bills. The Federal Trade Commission is preparing to enforce right-to-repair policies.

What's the catch? Big Tech companies in highly competitive segments like premium smartphones, tablets, and laptops differentiate themselves through design, materials, and premium build quality.

- Thinner and lighter devices are incompatible with modular construction and easy-to-repair devices, so these companies likely won't change the way they design and make products in the near future.
- But some companies have tried to respond. Apple recently said it would allow customers to fix their own devices and would make available the manuals and tools to do so—once more

putting the repairability onus on consumers.