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Subject: Re: Why do appliances fail at bad times

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Thu, 06 Oct 2022 14:14:12 GMT

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I hear you, Bruce. I much prefer equipment designed and built to last for decades. All of my favorite gear lasts longer than a lifetime. That's how everything was built prior to WWII, and most stuff was built that way up through the 1970s. Most stuff made after that is built to last a few years only, and then discarded and replaced rather than repaired.

When I was young - in my first jobs, while still in school - electronics was still repaired at the component level, but there was a new trend of replacing a subassembly and sending the defective one to a depo that would repair it at the component level. I resisted that 'cause it seemed like "cheating," and almost always repaired things at a component level myself.

When I started my business, my main focus was to design custom communications and industrial control modules for customers like Walmart, Whirlpool and Fedex. But I also wrote service contracts with customers that owned Data General computer systems. I would purchase functional used systems and equipment for use as spares, and when customer equipment broke, I would replace an assembly in the field with spare equipment I owned, and then would bring it back to my office to repair. So I borrowed the depo approach, using it to save time at the customer site.

I can understand the depo approach, and repairing things at an assembly level in the field. I can even understand the economics of making an assembly so cheaply that it is discarded rather than repaired. I don't like that as much 'cause it nudges us closer to the "replaceable junk" mentality that we now seem to embrace. But it does make economic sense for the manufacturers. I just don't like it. It makes everything just plain cheap.

It changes how people treat their equipment too. When people make a purchase of durable equipment - something built to last - they tend to take care of it. But when they buy a disposable item, they tend to trash it.

I think it has even influenced our social mindset. I think it adds to the entitlement and narcissism that's kind of built-in to the culture these days.

So glad I grew up back in the 1960s.