

Right to repair draft submission

I'm proposing a product labelling scheme. There is an inherent instability in our system of Capitalism. It does not sufficiently take into account how long an item will last. If you take into account the time pressure in making an item but not the time factor from promise of guarantees to last, the lasting will tend towards zero. This is difficult to prove mathematically because of the different time periods in the life of items are not easily represented. However it is able to be seen when viewed intuitively.

Here is an analytical breakdown:

There are three important time periods for each item:

- Manufacture of item (with time pressure and an incentive to make it fail) followed by Purchase of item and change of location (at least once).
- Use of item (or shelf life), (length of life is of value) followed by a use by date.
- At the end of life there is a cost of disposal/repair. This could be compared to the use value and price.

To break this down: For each item, there are two relative views, each with their own priority. By definition, manufacture is the first phase, so has the power over consequences later on. Built in redundancy (planned obsolescence) is a concern where the country of manufacture is not the country of use. Unless educated choices are available, the country of manufacture has control over this and the setting of initial price. The Country that is making purchases will lose out financially, especially if brand names and past quality cannot be relied upon. Items such as clothing have been observed to look the same, be of same brand and yet have an incremental decline in quality at different purchase dates, without a corresponding reduction in price. There is a lack of balance.

We have been relying on goodwill of manufacturer and eye of consumer (shop keepers as well as users of product). These are no longer reliable. Broken items are a drag on our economy and environment. They usually go to landfill or clutter someone's spare room or shed. It is also stressful and depressing to deal with breaking items. After its use, an item has a 'ghost' life. If GPS tracking of e-waste is put in place then privacy for user would need to be paramount.

I have a plan to resolve these issues. Capitalism can work for us by assisting our choices to direct the manufacturer into making sustainable products.

I am proposing labelling of goods incorporate a ledger with:

1. Overall quality and durability of item (5 red star system)
2. Estimated/planned length of life (bar scale/s)
3. Plan for waste/ recycling/ repair (5 black star system with colours representing toxicity unresolved issues)

This ledger can be visualised with the implementation of icons, see Appendix 1.

Packaging could also be assessed and classed - See Appendix 2.

China is important to us, as our major trading partner. They say 'Keep your eyes on the sun' and that is what we are doing with our three tiered system. - See Appendix 3.

There may be different structures for different classes of item, for example food, clothing, electrical items and vehicles. Your draft has looked mainly towards larger, more expensive items but much gain can be made with smaller items and companies also. Transparency for production and consumers must help with healthy competition and best purchasing decisions.

Faults in items can be due to misuse as well as manufacturing weaknesses and ordinary use. Disputes could be settled with assistance from external bodies. When cradle to grave is taken in to account, it is worth repairing items. Let's plan to make items easily repairable or at least have a plan for recycling and disposal. Fixism is an ethical pursuit and makes people feel good. We have been travelling down a road aiming for growth but we have blinkers on and don't see how much we are buying. The youth of today are often unaware of just how long items can last if made with care and quality. In the past there were good manufacturing habits because the manufacturer was just down the road and could be held responsible. It is not so easy these days but internet and phone mean that information can be relayed across countries. Information on the quality and instructions on the repair of items can be made available before purchase.

Too often we are encouraged to buy a new item, with replacement of parts such as batteries being expensive. Often you need to replace a whole component instead of just the broken part. A new men's shaver, priced \$130 was dropped from a low height in the first week of use and the plastic surrounding for the small metal piece broke. No longer under warranty, the whole head could be bought for the same price as a new razor. The business of small repairs is important. Items should be clearly labelled 'fragile' if they will likely break if dropped during use. This would impact on their star rating and a viable repair sequence suggested. If dropping sometimes could be expected in normal use then durability ought to be built in and the responsibility still goes back to the manufacturer. Disposal should only be OK if the whole item, such as crockery, breaks. Plastics are important to consider because they are able to be made with great quality and durability but are too often designed to fail. Planned obsolescence is a huge and growing problem. If normal use is in the sun, then this should be taken into account. I bought clothes pegs that lasted only 6 months. Annoying and time consuming. Metal components should be assessed for appropriate strength and longevity for example rust in salty, humid or wet environments. A Farmer looked for a replacement part because his had gone rusty. He found the part but it was already rusty in the shop.

There would be a number of positive outcomes from introducing the ledger system:

- it would create incentive for responsible and local manufacturing. A local waiver to proposed labelling legislation may be also be viable.
- It would also save a lot of wasted money and bad investments for people attracted to well presented items.
- Waste, especially toxic waste would be reduced
- There would give opportunity to create incentives and abilities to repair items

An economy must include information as suggested to be viable long term. Otherwise it will evolve to contain instabilities, as has been the case. Consumerism without available plain, ethical choices is an economy bound to fail.

Thanks for considering this initiative.