

# RepairMonitor

## Summary analysis results 2019

### Preface

The Repair Café International Foundation has analysed the data entered in the RepairMonitor in 2019. The RepairMonitor is the online tool in which Repair Café volunteers keep track of their repair data. In this monitor, volunteers of 67 Repair Cafés (38 from the Netherlands, 9 from France, 7 from the UK, 4 from Australia, 3 from Germany, 3 from Canada, 2 from Belgium, and 1 from the US) entered data on a total of 13,609 repairs. This report analyses how, and how quickly, products break down and which factors hinder a successful repair. The aim of this report is to identify what needs to be done to make products more repairable, so they will contribute to a circular economy.

### Analysis

The ten products most presented for repair in 2019 are coffee makers, trousers, vacuum cleaners, lamps, bicycles, clocks, sewing machines, computers/laptops, radios, and coats. Other often repaired products are irons, jewelry, electric kettles, and knives/scissors.

The ten most common brands in the RepairMonitor are Philips, Sony, Bosch, Tefal, Miele, Nespresso, Samsung, Miele, HP, Black & Decker, and Siemens. Other often repaired brands are Braun and Gazelle.

The success rate of the repairs is 63%, two percent less than in 2018. This is lower for the repair of electric/electronic products (53%; in 2018 this was 56%), and considerably higher for products without an electrical system (85%; the same as in 2018). Approximately 68% of all repairs concerned electric/electronic products.

Visitors come with very diverse problems to the Repair Café. Often an item is not really broken, but has a small defect, such as a pair of trousers that is too long, the filter of a vacuum cleaner is blocked, blunt scissors or empty batteries in a clock.

The repairers identified various reasons why repairs do not succeed. The most mentioned reason is the lack of spare parts. Problems with opening a product is also often mentioned. Other obstacles to repair are: the repair is too expensive, the repair takes too much time, the product is worn out, the cause for not functioning can't be found or the repair has failed.

In 42% of the registered repairs, it is indicated how old a product is (approximately). Of these items, 84% is at the most twenty years old, 55% less than ten years old. Of the ten most common products, coffee machines are, on average, the least old when they are brought to the Repair Café; 75% of the coffee machines with known age is younger than 10 years old. Clocks are, on average, the oldest; 41% of the clocks with a known age is older than 50 years.

Repairers appear to make little use of repair information. In 7,994 of the 13,609 repairs (59%) did the repairers answer the question about the use of repair information. Of these 7,994 repairs, the majority (6,192) did not use repair information, while in 1,228 cases the repairer searched for information, but couldn't locate it. Repair information was used in only 574 repairs. This is 4% of all registered repairs in 2019. In one-third of the cases, the repair information was obtained from the manufacturer. Tips, photos, videos, and other types of information were often made available by colleague repairers.

## Conclusions and recommendations

### **Repair always the first step**

Of all the repairs described in the RepairMonitor, 63% was successful. This shows that repair makes sense and should always be the first step when something breaks.

### **More emphasis on maintenance**

Many of the problems described in the RepairMonitor are the result of poor maintenance: cleaning, descaling, lubricating, tightening, etc. Apparently, consumers are not sufficiently aware of the need to maintain their products. Repair Cafés make their visitors attentive to this. A public campaign could help. Producers and retailers must also emphasise the importance of maintenance more.

### **More repair knowledge needed among the public**

The relative simplicity of problems described in the RepairMonitor demonstrates the lack of repair knowledge among the general public. More attention for repair skills and working with your hands in schools can help solve this problem. Repair Café volunteers can be deployed as supervisors/coaches.

### **Producer must actively support repair**

According to the RepairMonitor, if repairs are unsuccessful, this is often because products cannot be disassembled, parts cannot be repaired, there are no replacement parts, and there is hardly any documentation available for repairers. The transition to a circular economy demands that producers change this. Especially the reparability of electric/electronic products must be improved.

### **Governments should demand repairable products**

Not only for consumers and producers, also municipalities, governments, and the European Union play an important role in making products repairable. The Repair Café International

Foundation, together with the Dutch environmental organisation Natuur & Milieu, already formulated earlier the following recommendations for governments. These are still valid:

- Make the provision of repair manuals by producers mandatory;
- Require the use of standard screws and other fixing materials and prohibit the gluing together of parts;
- Require longer warranty periods;
- Require that batteries and other critical, rapidly aging, and vulnerable parts can be replaced by consumers themselves;
- Require manufacturers to keep spare parts available for consumers and repairers;
- Increase taxes on raw materials and reduce taxes on (repair) labour;
- Inform consumers of the financial and environmental benefits of repairing and where to turn to for repairs;
- Ensure networking and knowledge exchanges between Repair Cafés, thrift stores, waste collection station, and other local organizations that can play a role in extending the lifespan of products.

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