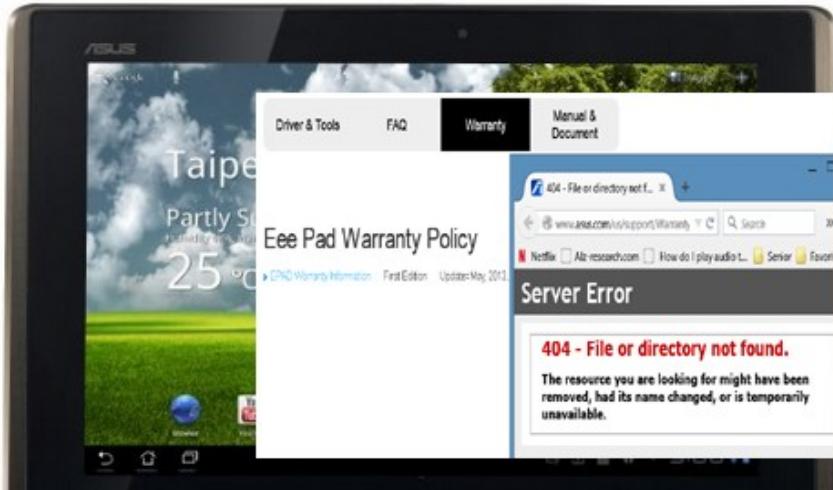




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Planned Obsolescence

DRAFT PROPOSAL - please edit for our discussion at meetings - add your thoughts and comments.
We will need a second to discuss it – it doesn't mean you support it.



Have you ever noticed that the day after the warranty expires the product ceases to function? My ASUS tablet (TF-101) failed near the end of the warranty period. They repaired it. The repair had a 90 warranty. Shortly after 90 days it failed again. ASUS refused warranty repair.

BACKGROUND: Generally speaking solid state devices are practically indestructible and will last a very long time. The computer chips, metal components and plastics are manufacturer rated to last over 20 years. In recent times consumer warranties on electronic products have shortened to as little as 30 days.

Often the computer systems that control devices can make it appear to be failing. Since the components are not actually damaged, the repair is nothing more than a check box on a menu instructing the computer to cause the component to resume normal function though from the consumers standpoint the product just dies and repair is often more expensive than purchasing a new one.

Aside from a product defect, which is covered under warranty, the only other reason for product failure is artificial limits placed on its useful life. This is called planned obsolescence.

*Some inkjet printer manufacturers employ **smart chips in their ink cartridges** to prevent them from being used after a certain threshold (number of pages, time, etc.)...*

Often laptop computers have a protruding power plug. When sitting in your lap, it wiggles or bangs against the arm of the chair. Since it is soldered to the mother board over several years microscopic cracks appear in the solder. The computer reboots erratically. It's time to buy another computer (A right angle plug would have been as simple fix).

PROPOSAL: Senior commission recommends the City of Austin stop purchasing electronic products which artificially limit useful life of the product;

1. **STOP** purchasing products with warranties of less than 5 years;
2. **USE** the public's buying power to influence the market on behalf of consumers to discourage **planned obsolescence**.