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## Chapter 1: Dismantling

When salvaging components, we are looking for abandoned hardware. Hardware that is still fine on the inside, but no longer deemed as functional by its previous owner<sup>1</sup> in our consumer culture. These devices can be a goldmine of working parts that could be repurposed, as their hardware probably exceeded their stylistic obsolescence<sup>3</sup>.

When inspecting a device for salvage possibilities, I try to imagine what the inside of the device looks like. What kind of components might I find? Is it above my skill set (I don't mess with power supplies) Are there any motors or moving parts? What kind of material is the device made off? What time period is it from? If I don't expect much, I'll leave it for the next person to salvage.

When you've found a device you'd like to salvage parts from, it's time for the dismantling process. In this dismantling process, we are going to take apart the device to gain access to all the smaller parts inside.

[1] The spectrum of "still fine" and "no longer deemed as functional" is very wide. Think about printers for which their specific cartridges are no longer produced, Blu-ray players, the E.T. game that was buried<sup>2</sup>, that iPhone 8 with a bad battery, Spotify's "Car Thing", etc. [↪](#)

[3] **stylistic obsolescence**  
The idea that objects can go out of fashion the idea, and therefore needed to be replaced every season <sup>4</sup>. [↪](#)

### Recommended Tools

## Illustration of the tools

For this, the following tools are recommended:

- A set of screwdrivers
- A plastic "thing" (e.g. a plectrum, or a dull plastic knife)

Dependent on your device, additional specialty tools might be required, such as:

- A hot air gun
- A drill/dremmel/saw to cut away plastic
- Apples 10k repair tools

## Opening the device

In some cases, product manufacturers provide service manuals<sup>6</sup>. These service manuals contain valuable information that can help you understand the device and take it apart. Unfortunately, none of the devices I've taken apart came with service manuals, meaning we have to figure it out ourselves. There are online communities that<sup>5</sup> create their own dismantling guides.

Let's take a look at the device. Do you spot any screws? They might be hidden behind stickers noting you that you are now voiding your warranty<sup>7</sup>. I found it helpful to follow the seams of the material of the device since, especially with plastics, it's not just screws holding your device together.

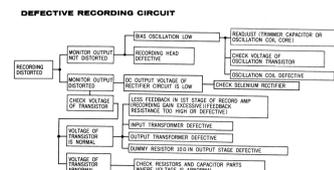
If you've managed to get a gap in a seam somewhere, stick a thin plastic "thing" in there and carefully push it along the seam. There might be tiny tabs holding the parts together. If the manufacturer really didn't want you to get in there, they've glued it all up, and it is impossible to get in the device without causing permanent damage<sup>9</sup>. A hot air gun could help to dissolve the glue (I'm afraid of melting plastic), or you could cut out the plastic using a knife or drill.

This process really is about finding small gaps in the enclosures<sup>11</sup>, until you've dismantled the entire device. Did you manage? Amazing!

## Overview of dismantled devices

[6]

### TROUBLE SHOOTING GUIDE 1



This repair manual that passed the Repair Club contains a schematic, disassembly information, parts list and multiple trouble shouting guides. [↪](#)

[5] since the manufacturer refuses. [↪](#)

[7] These warranty stickers are not always legally binding. <sup>8</sup>. Plus, do you have the receipt for something you found in the bin? [↪](#)

[9] These glued up personal devices are clearly not made to be opened. They are black boxes by design, designed to become obsolete (Hertz & Parikka, 2012)<sup>10</sup>. [↪](#)

[11] slowly removing the outer layer of your black box, revealing the inner mechanisms. [↪](#)



### Telephone

This phone has great buttons! I want to try to make the recipe around expressive touch pads with this!



### Reel to Reel recorder

This device misses a few parts but hopefully the tape heads still function

600 × 400

### Hard drive

I recently heard that Hard Drives contain magnets!



### MP3 / FM Radio

tl;dr

## Hardware to look out for, or to avoid

In retrospect, i'll write here something about what to look out for and what to avoid. I'd like to discuss things like tiny tiny components vs. bigger vintage resistors, but this I think will be better to do within the "components" chapter.

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[2] Atari video game burial ↪

[4] Sterne, J. (2007). Out with the Trash: on the future of New Media. In C. R. Acland (Ed.), Residual media. U of Minnesota Press. ↪

[8] Aragon, N. (2024, December 17). Warranty Void Stickers: Are they legal outside the US? iFixit. <https://www.ifixit.com/News/74736/warranty-void-stickers-are-illegal-in-the-us-what-about-elsewhere> ↪

[10] Hertz, G., & Parikka, J. (2012). Zombie Media: Circuit Bending Media Archaeology into an Art Method. Leonardo, 45(5), 424–430. [https://doi.org/10.1162/leon\\_a\\_00438](https://doi.org/10.1162/leon_a_00438) ↪