iRobot halts its Roomba subscription service as it gets a new CEO



iRobot has ended its robot vacuum subscription service iRobot Select, which got you a high-end Roomba for less money upfront. But along with free replacement parts and accessories and the option to upgrade every three years, the program also enabled iRobot to shut down the vacuum remotely if you stopped paying.

iRobot Select launched in 2021 along with the j7 Plus Roomba, offering that robot with its sleek auto-empty station to subscribers. According to a statement from iRobot provided to *TechHive*, the company suspended new subscriptions as part of its organizational restructuring. While you can no longer sign up for the service, existing subscribers will keep their benefits for now.

With Roombas frequently on sale, the value of the iRobot Select plan today was tepid at best. At launch, iRobot Select cost $29 a month with a $99 activation fee for a vacuum that

was $850 to buy outright. But that activation fee eventually went up to $199 while Roomba prices went down. And while iRobot introduced a fixed two-year plan with a lower fee, it came with stiff penalties if you tried to bail early.

According to iRobot, all current subscribers to the fixed plan are being moved to the month-to-month plan when their term ends. What will happen to those customers' vacuums should the company discontinue the program entirely is unclear. Here's hoping iRobot doesn't just reach out and deactivate them.

The move comes on the heels of iRobot announcing a new CEO, Gary Cohen, who will lead a company that's in financial trouble after Amazon's failed purchase attempt and layoffs that impacted over 350 employees. An executive with a track record of turning around troubled companies, Cohen has had stints at Timex, Energizer, and Playtex following almost two decades at Gillette. He has quite a big mess to clean up at the company. While iRobot was one of the first robot vacuum makers, its dominant market share has dwindled thanks to competitive pressure from Chinese manufacturers that churn out dozens of new robots every month.

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