Third-party Mac repair shops will gain access to Apple tools, parts



Enlarge / Removing the scissor switch in a 16-inch MacBook Pro, courtesy of iFixit.

reader comments

29 with 22 posters participating

Share this story

Today, Apple announced that it will expand a program that gave third-party repair shops access to its own proprietary tools, diagnostics, and parts. Launched last year, the program initially only provided the resources for servicing iPhones. Now it will apply to Macs as well. As with the iPhone program, shops can sign up for the program for free, and those that join will be given free training and access to parts.

Apple has tried to make its own services like AppleCare+ and

the Genius Bar at Apple retail stores a major selling point for would-be Mac users who want good repair options without having to figure out which shops are reliable or to do any of the work themselves. While those services often get high marks from Apple's customers, there's a major problem: the company's own Apple Store locations mainly service major urban centers in relatively wealthy nations.

There are several gaps in that coverage, leaving iPhone or Mac owners who don't live in these locations with fewer options. This repair-parts program may be a first step to alleviating some of that problem. It will allow some third-party shops that serve areas that Apple Stores don't to provide a level of service for iPhones and Macs that is closer to what consumers would get at an Apple Store.

Further, the expansion of this program is moving forward as Apple is the focus of intense scrutiny from lawmakers and consumer advocate organizations, as well as antitrust investigation, related to Apple's end-to-end product strategy.

Apple's explicitly stated strategy is to control not just the hardware and software that make up its products, but also associated services like the App Store or repair programs. The argument is that this creates better experiences for users who buy into it, but some watchdogs, legislators, regulators, and commentators argue that it is anticompetitive.

The growth of this program signals something of a shift in Apple's strategy—a sort of middle ground that might potentially undercut some of those criticisms while giving consumers in some markets more robust repair options. That said, the program remains small—it's only a few hundred shops so far in the United States, Canada, and Europe—and Apple still builds its products in such a way that means access to the company's own tools and parts is optimal for many repairs.

https://arstechnica.com/?p=1699460