

Apple Just Classified Several More Devices As 'Vintage'

Summary

Apple classifies products as “vintage” five to seven years after they stop selling them, meaning they are no longer guaranteed repairable at Apple Stores and may not receive software updates. After seven years, products become “obsolete,” losing almost all hardware support except for potential battery replacements on MacBooks. While frustrating for users of older devices, this policy reflects the rapid pace of technological advancement and the challenges of supporting outdated products.

What it means when your devices are officially declared out of date—or even “obsolete.”

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Every tech product you own has a “lifespan,” and I'm not referring to how long you use it before it stops working, you break it, or decide to buy a new one. Instead, this is how long the device will be officially supported by its maker—a timeframe that could be shorter or longer than how long it will actually last. Apple guarantees it will continue supporting products [at least five years after it stops selling them](#). Once those five years are up, Apple can deem that

device “vintage.”

On Tuesday, Apple [classified two more of its products as vintage](#): the iPhone 11 Pro Max, as well as all Apple Watch Series 3 models. Apple previously did this back in May, when it labeled the iPhone 7 Plus (2016) and some iPhone 8 models (2017) as vintage. So what exactly does it mean for an Apple product to be classified as “vintage,” and what happens when a vintage product becomes “obsolete”?

What it means when Apple classifies a product as "vintage"

"Vintage" in Apple land doesn't actually mean a product is "old" or that you should stop using it—nor does it imply you'll be able to sell it to collectors for a profit. When an Apple device becomes “vintage,” that product is no longer guaranteed by Apple to

be repairable at an Apple Store or other authorized service provider. In many cases, Apple will also stop issuing routine software updates for that device.

Apple's official definition of vintage is a product the company stopped selling more than five years ago, but fewer than seven. Because the company stops selling some devices sooner than others, you end up with some interesting discrepancies when it's time to mark devices as vintage. Apple seems to have sold the iPhone 11 Pro longer than the iPhone 11 Pro Max, hence why the former is still not "vintage." (You can find a full list of all vintage and obsolete devices on [Apple's support site](#).)

Despite the reduction in support, vintage Apple devices will still work (reclassification isn't some sort of internal kill switch) and some devices may even continue to receive system updates if they support the latest operating systems or if a major security flaw needs to be patched. [The iPhone 11 Pro Max runs iOS 26](#), after all. It's even possible you could get one repaired, if the parts are available. Just don't be surprised if an Apple Genius or an Apple-authorized vendor turns you away.

What do you think so far?

Once a product is more than seven years old, it graduates from vintage to a different category: "obsolete."

Apple's "obsolete" list

Like vintage products, devices listed as "obsolete" will operate as normal as long as the hardware is in working condition. However, obsolete products lose virtually all hardware support. The only exception is MacBooks, which may allow for a battery replacement up to 10 years after the product was last available for sale.

You shouldn't expect the latest version of iOS to work on an obsolete iPhone, and software updates will also likely be a thing of the past. In rare cases though, Apple may supply security updates to obsolete iPhones: [All iPhone 6S models still receive security updates](#), including the 32GB 6S Plus, which is obsolete.

These shifts in service priority can be frustrating if you're still rocking older tech and don't feel like upgrading, but the policy makes sense, given the current market realities: At the rate that both hardware and software iterate, diverting resources to keep outdated devices afloat is difficult and costly. However, even if an Apple Store turns your iPhone 11 Pro Max away for repair, independent repair shops may still help you out for some time to come—even when the 11 Pro Max eventually becomes "obsolete."