

LUNCH & LEARN: How to get more longevity out of your technology

On March 23, 2024, experts from local repair company [Gophermods](#) presented tips and tricks for extending the life of your cell phone, laptop, and other battery-powered personal technology.

Speakers:

Anthony Berens is proud to be managing the Gophermods store in Minneapolis. He has a passion for learning how things work and helping people keep their devices going. He previously worked in the food industry with a focus on sustainability and enjoys helping others make decisions that are better for our environment.

Benjamin Kenote is the Director of Operations at Gophermods. He has been in the industry for the past 15 years and is currently working with a worldwide organization to develop sustainable practices at Gophermods.

About Gophermods: Gophermods is your go-to technology solutions partner. Whether it's fixing a device, upgrading your device, or general tech information and troubleshooting, we are committed to finding a sustainable solution that fits your needs.

TIPS & TRICKS

Computer maintenance and updates.

- To ensure your computer and phone software are running smoothly, check for updates regularly, ideally once a month, and install them as needed.
 - Updates can resolve security concerns, software changes, and driver issues
 - Updates can fix problems with webcams, mouse pads, and application usage
 - If you're unsure how to check for updates, use the search bar in your computer or phone's settings menu to find the Update section

Computer and phone battery health and charging best practices.

- Avoid overcharging
- Use quality charging cables such as the charger that came with your device and or purchasing one from a reputable source to ensure safe and efficient charging
- Certain phones have built-in wireless charging capabilities, while others may not
- Unplug devices when not in use to prolong battery life

- Some devices, like some iPhone and Samsung devices, recognize user habits for optimized charging
- Question about the battery charge indicator stopping at 85% and whether disabling it could help, to which the speaker replied that it's a safe thing to disable and should not affect the phone's longevity
- Calibrate a new device's battery by fully charging and discharging it a few times to improve battery accuracy
- There are advantages of hardwired charging, like speed, but newer iPhones have MagSafe charging that is faster than traditional wireless charging
- Keeping a laptop, phone or tablet in a cold car may diminish the battery slightly, but shouldn't hurt it

Computer and phone storage.

- Clean up digital devices monthly to free up space and avoid complications
- Backup data through physical backups on an external hard drive or computer
- Speakers also recommended using cloud options for backing up data, as they are the safest and most reliable way to do so
 - Use a service integrated into the product you're already using for easy backup of important data
 - One speaker uses Microsoft OneDrive to back up their data, including photos, videos, and trainings, and can easily restore them when signing into a new device
 - OneDrive is typically reserved for Windows laptops, while iCloud and Google Photos are recommended for iPhone and Android users, respectively

Buying refurbished/used devices vs buying new.

- Reuse refurbished devices to reduce demand for new materials and support green manufacturing
- Repowered, Free Geek, and Gophermods are recommended for buying used electronics, offering more robust and durable machines at a lower cost than new laptops
- Buying a used computer that's been rebuilt can reduce waste and save money
- Speakers advise against buying used computers without a warranty or guarantee, citing the risk of technical issues and lack of support
- Gophermods prioritizes selling devices with warranties or guarantees to ensure customer satisfaction and to help avoid ending up with "lemons"

Maintaining, repairing and recycling electronics.

- Gophermods offers data recovery services, including free estimates, and can transfer photo, videos, documents, and audio files to a different drive
- OnTrack is a leader in data recovery and offers free estimates, making them a valuable resource for those in need of significant data recovery services
- Batteries in phones, tablets, computers, and laptops are replaceable, but smaller devices like watches and headphones may require upgrading
 - Battery replacements can extend device life, but cost-effectiveness depends on phone age and condition
 - Recycling batteries is challenging, including the risk of trucks catching fire due to improper disposal methods
- Repairing cracked screens or non-functional ports can be more affordable than replacing a phone entirely
- Speakers warn against attempting to clean clogged/dirty charging ports on your own, as it requires specialized tools and can cause further damage
- Clean your phone's speaker grill(s) once a month with isopropyl alcohol and a microfiber cloth
- Audience question about buying surge protection. Speakers recommend researching surge protection options before purchasing, considering factors like price, warranty, and grounding cables
- Repair shops have more access to manufacturer/branded parts than before, including Apple's new parts and repair guides
- Recycling electronic devices at the end of their life
 - Repowered dismantles electronics and recycles them responsibly
 - Best Buy accepts some devices for recycling
 - Suggestions for giving items away: Tinkerers may find value in repurposing old electronics, rather than solely recycling them