

Re: interesting

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From: Terry Given (*my_name_at_ieee.org*)

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Clifford Heath wrote:

> *John Larkin wrote:*

>

>> *...CS or IT educations, which both limits their utility to hacking*

>> *C++ and makes them prime targets for foreign outsourcing.*

>

>

> *What an ignorant attitude. The reason that EE is being hit so*

> *much harder than software is that it's worked for 40 years to*

> *make products that don't need support (repair and training) and*

> *indeed most mass-market products aren't even possible to repair.*

> *When you haven't got (and don't need) a support industry, you*

> *lose the seeding ground for your product enterprises.*

Pah. John's bang on wrt CS/IT, although its not just foreign outsourcing thats the issue –there are ludicrous numbers of CS/IT parasites spewing forth from universities, mostly because they pay the same fees as, say, civil engineers, but are a hell of a lot cheaper to train, ergo are a source of greater profitability for the universities, which invariably have to meet economic goals. From an individuals perspective, I would steer clear of this group, because there are more of them hence more competition. The "law" of Supply & Demand suggests this will drive wages down (hey, its part of the reason I chose power electronics as a specialty. The explosions were the main reason though), as evinced by the massive outsourcing of sw jobs from the US to countries like India.

wrt the non-repairability of electronics, that is IMO mostly concerned with fucked up economic models. When the assembly staff are being paid a few cents per hour to build a complex product, invariably in a country with little or no worker protection (reminds me of the taiwanese pcb plant I my boss took pictures of, staffed by barefoot Filipinos breathing highly noxious fumes), its hardly surprising that replacement is "cheaper" than paying a 1st-world tech to repair it – said tech being paid tens of dollars per hour, within some sort of framework of worker protection legislation.

>

> *The same hasn't and won't happen with software, because support*

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- > *is always going to be needed. Some software can be outsourced,*
- > *but there will always be smart local folk who can come up with*
- > *a bright product idea and make money out of it without being*
- > *immediately undercut by an Asian competitor. That's not to say*
- > *that broken software can be "fixed" – look at Windows! – but that*
- > *its failings are handled by better support, not by throwing it*
- > *away and starting again with a new model.*
- >
- > *Clifford Heath.*

Really? I would argue that "support is always going to be needed" precisely because those writing the software are mostly talentless, bungling fools. Almost all electronic products nowadays contain embedded software, much of which **never** gets upgraded – usually because it was well written and tested, by EEs. OTOH PC software is usually inflicted on the hapless public the minute the GUI is looks vaguely useable – I have seen several companies not even **consider** a testing phase for software, instead releasing it ASAP, followed by huge amounts of code revisions lasting years after the original project was "finished", and I am sure that is only the tip of the iceberg.

Alas managers dont seem to grasp such subtleties as total cost of ownership, or if they do appear to be blinded by the flashy graphics of GUIs, coupled with the low pay rates inexperienced CS/IT grads command. This ensures crap software prevails.

Cheers
Terry