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Exploring Narratives of Repair.

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This paper reports on EPSRC-funded research addressing how the promotion of resource efficient product lifecycles can be incorporated within future, more localised and responsive structures of manufacturing and product adaptation. A specific focus of this study is the people-product interactions that occur across life, and in particular, those interactions that seek to extend product life of consumer durables through maintenance and repair activities. The research reports on the development of repair and reuse narratives drawn from real-life stories of the people engaged with repair cafes and other maker and mending initiatives that encourage people to be more actively engaged in extending product life. Repair Cafes and Maker-spaces are spaces that offer new structures of design and production, in which enthusiast hackers, tinkerers, thinkers and doers gather to create their own inventions or repair and adapt products that already exist. These spaces challenge the linear thinking of take-make-dispose by giving an opportunity to share skills of repair and to maintain objects for longer periods of use.

The project proposes that a repair and maker approach can foster different types of people-product relationships across the lifecycle of consumer durable products. The lifecycle stage of repair provides an opportunity to understand the stories of why products break, and the context of local and dispersed re-making beyond the formal agreements that the product warranty provides. Narratives of repair are collected in these different contexts and identify diverse people-product interactions that currently exist. A number of methods of engagement are used to gather data, understand user needs, and support lifecycle decision-making. These narratives are analysed to draw out contexts, characteristics and motivations of repair. A *landscape of repair* is constructed to explore the links between people, products and resource flows. The landscape provides a framework for the design and development of a repair-based game aimed at collecting and collating many individual responses to product repair decisions across product lifetimes. It is planned that the repair game will provide the basis for one of the workshops to be held as part of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's Disruptive Innovation Festival in November 2016.

This paper reviews the role of localised repair and making in extending lifespans of consumer durables. It describes a landscape of repair drawn from the collated repair narratives and reflects on how different types of people-product interactions throughout product life can foster new opportunities for redistributed manufacture and circular flows of resources across product lifetimes.