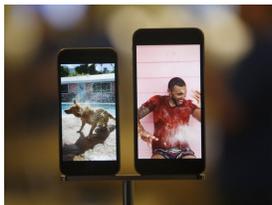# iPhone 6 'touch disease' a boon to fixit shops

**USA TODAY NETWORK**   Khristopher J. Brooks, Rochester (N.Y.) Democrat and Chronicle     *8:50 a.m. EDT August 26, 2016*



*(Photo: TINA MACINTYRE-YEE @tyee23/staff photographer)*

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — There's a design glitch in some iPhone 6 and 6 Plus models that leaves a flashing gray bar at the top of the screen. It won't go away and it disables the touchscreen function of the phone.

It's a flaw that's annoying hundreds of iPhone users.

Jessa Jones, who owns iPad Rehab in Honeoye Falls, N.Y.,  is among scores of independent gadget repair shops across the country receiving an increase in orders (http://on.rocne.ws/2bZWog3) to fix the gray bar issue.

She calls the glitch the "Touch IC Disease."



USA TODAY

Apple issues security update to prevent iPhone spyware

(http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2016/08/25/apple-issues-security-update-prevent-iphone-spyware/89347242/)

Jones explained to ifixit.org, a gadget repair news blog, that the glitch is likely because the integrated circuit chip that controls the touchscreen function in an iPhone 6 and 6 Plus isn't always connected to the phone's main motherboard. The chips are supposed to lay on a group of solder balls and the solder balls are also connected to the phone's motherboard.

In previous versions of the iPhone, the motherboard-solder balls-circuit chip sandwich is held together by a strong, thin layer of metal so nothing will bend out of place. In the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus, the metal layer is replaced by a black sticker.

Jones said she believes iPhone users sometimes bend their phone — for example when they have it in their back pocket — separating the chip from the solder balls and the sticker doesn't provide enough resistance against the bend.

Jones said the glitch isn't present in older versions of the iPhone. Overall, the issue is affecting 20% of iPhone 6 and 6 Plus models, Jones said.



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Still, the glitch has created an uptick for Jones.

Jones' business started in 2013 when she began repairing devices in her dining room. The company moved into a dedicated facility in December and the operation is now staffed with a business manager, a shipping manager and two other repair specialists. Jones also has a one-person shop in Jacksonville, Fla.

Since April, Jones said her company has received eight to 10 iPhones with the flashing gray bar issue every day. Before April, her company would get perhaps two per week.

"We're on a treadmill with this stuff," she said, adding that she's not sure if the uptick will mean growing her operation even more.

The phones come from all over the world, Jones said. Most of the phones come from people whose Apple warranty on their phone has expired.

Jones said she repairs the issue, for $200, by replacing the integrated circuit chip, soldering on a metal layer to cover the chip, then mailing it back to the customer.

"That really seems to help with the long-term robustness of the repair," she told the news blog.

Jones said she tries to share her repair tips on the Apple Support Community forums, but officials with the company delete her posts.

Attempts to contact Apple by phone for comment on Thursday were unsuccessful.

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