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Home appliances are electrical/mechanical machines which accomplish some household functions, such as cooking or cleaning. Home appliances can be classified into:

Major appliances, or White goods

Small appliances, or Brown goods

Consumer electronics, or Shiny goods

This division is also noticeable in the service area of these kinds of products. Brown goods usually require high technical knowledge and skills (which get more complex with time, such as going from a soldering iron to a hot-air soldering station), while white goods need more practical skills and "brute force" to manipulate the devices and heavy tools required to repair them.

Major appliances

White goods/major appliances comprise major household appliances and may include: air conditioner, dishwasher, clothes dryer, drying cabinet, freezer, refrigerator, kitchen stove, water heater, washing machine, trash compactor, microwave ovens and induction cookers.

Small appliances

Brown goods/small appliances are typically small household electrical entertainment appliances such as: TV sets, CD and DVD players, camcorders, still cameras, clocks, alarm clocks, video game consoles, HiFi and home cinema, telephones and answering machines. Some types of brown goods were traditionally finished with or looked like wood or bakelite. This is now rather rare, but the name has stuck, even for goods that are unlikely ever to have been provided in a wooden case (e.g. camcorders). White goods were typically painted or enamelled white, and many of them still are. The addition of new items to these categories shows that the categories still serve a purpose in marketing.

Microwave ovens contain complex electronic boards (the clock and controller) but aren't repaired very often. Some brands send whole boards for replacement, and some have them repaired by such technicians.

Networking of home appliances

There is an increasing trend to network home appliances together, and combine their controls and key functions. For instance, energy distribution can be managed more evenly so that when the washing machine is on, the oven can go into a delayed start mode, or vice versa. Or, a washing machine and dryer may share information about load characteristics (gentle/normal, light/full), and synchronize their finish times so the wet laundry does not have to wait before being put in the dryer.

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