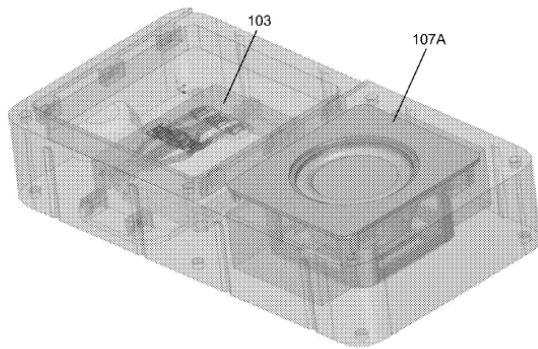


Facebook, Modular Phone Maker?

Written by Marco Attard
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Facebook is reportedly working on the kind of device even the mighty Google gave up on-- modular smartphones, at least according to a patent filed by the social network.



As Business Insider reports, Facebook owns a patent for a "modular electromechanical device" with different components adding functionality such as a speaker, microphone, touchscreen, GPS and even a phone. The result would solve the waste involved when dumping a phone for a better model. Interestingly, the device is designed to act as either a smartphone or a smart speaker.

"Typically, the hardware components included in the consumer electronics that are considered 'outdated' are still usable," the patent reads. "However, the hardware components can no longer be re-used since consumer electronics are designed as closed systems. From a consumer prospective, the life cycle of conventional consumer electronics is expensive and wasteful."

The team behind the patent for the mysterious modular device is located at Building 8, the Facebook skunkworks division. Leading it is Regina Dugan, a former DARPA director with experience in modular phones-- she used to be in charge of Advanced Technology and Projects (ATAP), the Google group that used to work on [Project Ara](#), the abortive Google stab at the smartphone format.

In addition, BI says Building 8 employs former Apple, Google and Motorola staffers with mobile device experience, as well as head of produce introduction Bernard Richardson (who worked on the Alexa speaker) and the team from Nascent Objects, a startup with a focus on modular electronics Facebook acquired last year.

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But will Facebook actually release a modular smartphone? The social network has no comment on the BI story, although such devices remain, as ever, an attractive proposition in both consumer and retail terms. Whether Facebook has the prowess to successfully build such a device, however, remains another matter all together.

Go [Facebook is Working on a Type of Device so Tough to Build, Even Google Gave Up on It \(Business Insider\)](#)