



Understand Your Technology

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I might be able to do the work myself, but I expect them to do it faster, better and with an awareness of possible problems I might not notice.

The further down the technology road we go, the more inclined I am to rely on "experts." When I was trained as a mechanic by the U.S. Army 40 years past, things were pretty simple under the hood. Between pollution control devices and on-board computers, I have no problem turning my car over to my mechanic.

Unfortunately, simply trusting an expert to know what they are doing isn't smart. When we built our house in the mid 1990s, air exchange systems were relatively new. I trusted the installation crew to do the job right. Years later we discovered they had installed the unit improperly.

Looking back, I realize I failed to understand the way the technology worked. I didn't need to know how to rewire switches or even compute airflow. However, I should have asked the installer to explain how the system worked and how the air was "exchanged."

In doing so, he and I might have seen the mistake he had made. If my mechanic makes a repair on my car, I know he can explain what he did and why. The same should be true for any "expert" we hire.

With the rapid advances being made, we can't be experts in everything. However, we owe it to ourselves to understand how the things we depend on in our daily life do work. If the expert you hire can't explain it, perhaps he doesn't know either.

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