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About the Author

Jestine Yong is co-founder of Noahtech Computer Repairing and Services, which has entered its 14 years operation. He has over 20 years of experience in repairing Computer Monitors, Power Supplies, Computer peripherals and related electronic troubleshooting.

A graduate from Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen UK, with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Jestine takes pride in active contributions to the field through the sharing of electronics repairing knowledge and expertise.



Within Noahtech, Jestine besides doing electronic repair he also serves as a lecturer in conducting technical workshops such as

- Basic and Intermediate Electronics Troubleshooting
- Basic Monitor Repairing and Troubleshooting
- Advance Monitor Repairing and Troubleshooting
- LCD Monitor Repairing and Troubleshooting
- Refurbish Flyback Transformer

Residing in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with his wife, Jestine is blessed with two lovely children. He enjoys teaching, internet marketing, writing, reading, swimming, travelling and fishing.

Official blog:

www.JestineYong.com

Web EBooks:

www.TestingElectronicComponents.com

www.LCD-Monitor-Repair.com

www.PowerSupplyRepairGuide.com

www.FindBurntResistorValue.com

How To Be A Successful Electronic Repairer

Second Interview With Steve French (The Owner of Mid-Florida Electronics USA)

Note: Before reading this interview, I suggest that you visit the website below first to read the first part at <http://www.electronicrepairguide.com/electronic-repair.html>



Jestine Yong- *How are you?*

Steve: I am doing just wonderful, Sir! I hope you are as well.

Jestine Yong- *Yes I'm fine thank you. It's been 2 years already since we had the interview. I heard that your repair business is growing. Would you kindly share to us about this good achievement?*

Steve: Let me tell you, a LOT has changed since your first interviewed me back in 2008. I got married last year to my beautiful wife and long-time friend, Laura. She and my new 8 year-old son, Dillon, have been a huge blessing in my life. Together we have purchased Mid-Florida

Electronics from the previous owner. I was always the one who physically ran the business but, now that I own it, I have even more incentive to do my best to make it flourish.



Part of Showroom (1)

Mid-Florida Electronics outgrew its original location and, after one year, moved to a larger space (in the same shopping plaza). We now have a retail showroom and we are also proud to have added 4 new brands to our authorised service center line-up: Sanyo, Toshiba, MagLite and VocoPro.



Part of showroom (2)

Jestine Yong- *That was really encouraging! How many staff do you have now? And what are their job positions in your company?*

Steve: Besides Laura and myself, we have two other technicians. Russell repairs CRT direct view and rear projection TVs, microwave ovens, handles all of our **MagLite** repairs (and he repairs a bunch of 'em), does service calls, and handles a lot of phone calls and customers. He stays busy. Ed handles a lot of the TVs (including flat panels) and many other types of equipment, as well as helping with service calls, customers and whatever else pops up.



Laura takes care of a lot of the behind-the-scenes stuff, such as the accounting, shipping and calling customers who are taking forever to pick up their repairs. She's the keeping me in line, which can be a full time job in itself (Haha). And me? I do most of the above mentioned things as well as parts research, ordering, repairs and everything else that has to be taken care of.

Jestine Yong- *What would you do to those who did not pick up their equipment after repaired? Do you sell it off or keep it for future use to remove the spare parts?*

Steve: We do get stuck with a fair number of units. Sometimes they are repaired, sometimes not. When customers do not approve the estimate for whatever reason (parts not available, cost too high, decides to buy replacement instead, etc...), we ask them then what they want us to do

with it. Do they want to come pick it up or have us dispose of it? This helps get rid of a lot of the junk because they often just tell us to trash the unit. At this point, we'll determine if it's worth repairing for resale or not and either fix it, scrap it for spare parts or take it to the dumpster.

Ones that are repaired – or that just don't get picked up – receive regular phone calls from Laura, who tries to get them to either pick up or tell us to sell or dispose of it. If she can't get in touch with them or if it sits here for 6 months (sometimes sooner) she sends them a registered letter with a pickup deadline. The letter has to be signed for by the customer when the postman delivers it, so we have record of when they receive the letter. Undelivered letters are returned to us by the post office and are then attached to the repair ticket.

Once the customer has been given fair warning – or all efforts have been made to contact them – the item goes out for sale or is disposed of on the date stated in the letter. We are as fair as we can but we can't store people's stuff for ever.

On a side note: Always try to encourage the customer to bring in and leave the remote when you take in TVs, DVD players, receivers and so on. They may not always have it or bring it with them, but it sure makes it easier to sell a TV that you get stuck with when you have the original remote. Plus, you sometimes need the original remote to perform adjustments, access certain modes or features or to enter the service menu.

Jestine Yong- *Why did you choose electronic repair business?*

Steve: I have always been fascinated with the apparent “miracles” that electronics are capable of performing. Even a simple circuit is an amazing thing if you think about it: electrons being manipulated to perform a useful or interesting task. From a very young age I desired to understand how components and circuits work. My interest led to project building and that led to my becoming a repair technician. I had a knack for it and caught on easily.



Jestine Yong- *How difficult is it for you to get started initially?*

Steve: The act of “getting started” is not hard; it is merely a matter of motivation and interest. But it does require a foundation and understanding of – at the very least – basic electrical and electronic theory. I had been tinkering and doing basic repairs for a few years already as a hobbyist. I walked in to my first interview for a repair tech position in 1991 with a confident attitude and got hired on the spot. The key is to have confidence in your career choice. Like many careers, electronics repair takes a lot of dedication and knowledge that can’t be learned over night. You have to be willing to spend the extra time to learn if you want to excel at it. It is an on-going process that is always part of the job.

Jestine Yong- *Can you please tell us the advantages of your electronic repair business?*

Steve: Our business has the advantage of a great team of very skilled repair techs. We three techs each have decades of experience. Experience is one of the most powerful advantages a tech can have, each of us has different strengths and – as such – we are able to work together as a team and solve many problems and repair challenges that we may not be able to otherwise. We also provide a service that is becoming harder to find, as changes in the market and the progression of technology has caused many shops to close their doors.

Jestine Yong- *How about the challenges and problems?*

Steve: An interesting aspect of this discipline is that nearly everything we work on presents a new challenge of some sort. For example, similar pieces of equipment – even with the same symptoms - can have completely different causes and may have to be troubleshot using different methods to discern exactly where the fault lies. Sometimes what may appear to be an electronic problem – or even a mechanical problem – can turn out to be a software/firmware problem. Situations like that can be very frustrating and difficult to figure out.

Jestine Yong- *Did you have any experience working in a corporate line, or any other jobs you've done before other than electronic repairing?*

Steve: I have had other types of jobs in my life. During my Jr. High school days I was a semi-pro magician. I was drummer for a few different working bands over a span of about 6 years. I delivered pizza for a year and even did gold and silver jewellery repair for about 2 years. But my main line of work has been in the repair field and I have done repairs for over 20 years now.

Jestine Yong- *Who are your customers and where do they come from?*

Steve: Our customers include everyday consumers, musicians, DJs, law enforcement agencies, fire and rescue departments, theme parks, pawn shops, music stores and everyone in between. Many of our customers find us through phone book ads or manufacturer referrals. Others find us by word of mouth, or they may see our signs while driving by or visiting other businesses in the shopping plaza.



Jestine Yong- *Could you tell us again what are the electronic equipment that your company is repairing?*

Steve: We repair televisions, monitors, home and pro audio equipment, video game consoles, CD/DVD, microwave ovens, musical keyboards, electric guitars and just about any other kind of kind of electronic and electrical device that comes through the door. We never know from day to day what kind of things will be brought to us. On the other hand, we stay away from most repairs of car audio, computers and transmitting devices (e.g. cell phones, CB radios, etc...).

Jestine Yong- *What are the tools, test equipment and skills needed to run your business?*

Steve: Repairing electronics requires at minimum some basic test equipment, such as a multi-meter, an ESR meter and an oscilloscope. But these are by no means the end of the list. Other pieces of equipment we use include Sencore "Z-Meters", capacitance meters, a curve tracer, IR detector, HV probes, load boxes, autotransformers (VARIACs) and isolation transformers, signal generators, and more.

Computers and the Internet have also become vital tools for the modern electronic tech. Almost all of our parts and service manuals and schematics (PDF files) are obtained via the internet. The Internet also allows us easy interaction with other technicians around the world (and manufacturers' tech support) to exchange ideas and information and even to file some of our warranty claims.

One easy-to-overlook but very important business tool we have is the “bench fee”. This is an upfront, non-refundable, nominal charge that the customer pays when they leave a repair with us. It covers our time and efforts required to diagnose their equipment, research parts, etc... The bench fee is applied to the customer’s bill if the unit gets repaired (we waive the bench fee when we charge a service call fee, which does NOT go towards their repair bill). A general rule of thumb is that if the customer is not willing to pay the bench fee they probably aren’t going to be willing to pay the repair charge and the estimate will be declined, meaning you have wasted your time (and sometimes parts and money too) troubleshooting. Without an up-front bench fee you will likely not get paid for that time and effort. Given the current state of the repair industry, charging a bench fee is an absolute must if you plan to stay in business for any length of time. Its importance cannot be over-stated. The days of free estimates in this industry are long gone.

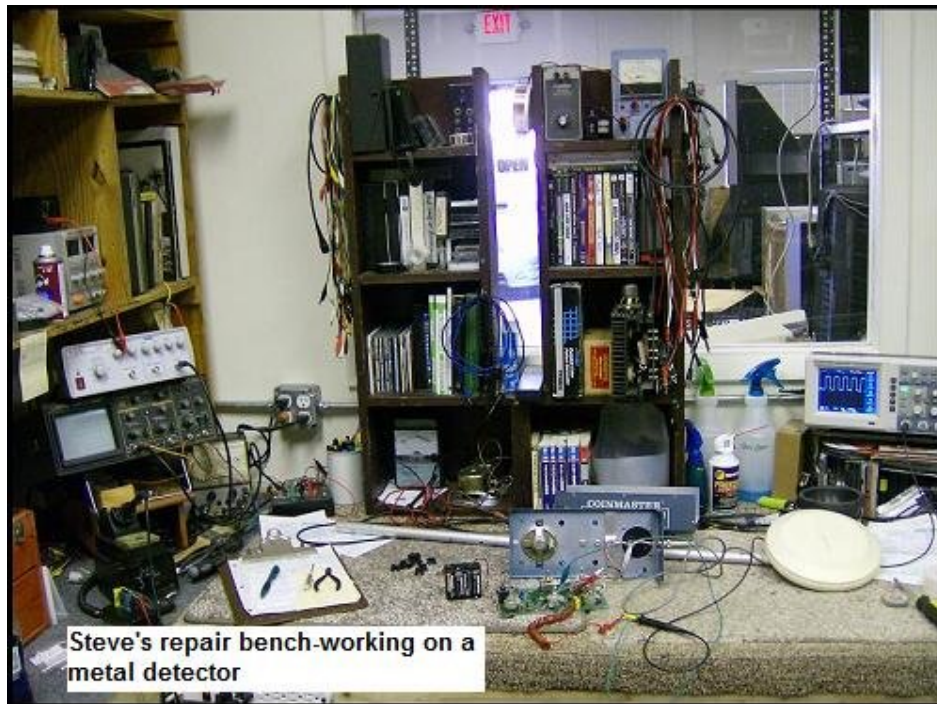
Jestine Yong- *Do you still visit electronic repair forum and buy electronics repair related books and Magazines?*

Steve: I do still visit a few repair forums, though I have not been as active as I used to be. I’ve had a lot keeping me busy with work and my new family. But, as I have time, I do try to continue adding tips to the database at TVrepairtips.org, where I am still an Administrator (though, in more of an honorary capacity now, since I have been so inactive lately).

There are also a lot of websites, such as yours, where technicians can go to learn new techniques and troubleshooting strategies.

Jestine Yong- *Do you plan to write a book on electronic repair?*

Steve: To tell you the truth, I have started working on several books about electronics and video gaming over the years but, sadly, I never followed through to quite bring them to fruition. However, if I may brag, I did write one of the most thorough and practical (in my opinion) Playstation 2 repair manuals ever published several years ago for Gamewinners.com (under the username “gamertech”). Real life solutions for real life failures.



Jestine Yong- *How do you promote your business?*

Steve: At this time we are relying mainly on our phone book ads (we are in three different phone books) our lighted signs on the front of the building, in and out-of-warranty referrals from manufacturers and word of mouth.

Jestine Yong- *What is the best strategy to convince a customer to send repair item to you or your company?*

Steve: There are a lot of simple things you can do. A big part of gaining customer confidence – at least initially – is to look and sound like you deserve it. Marketing is all about perception. Here are a few examples: A shop that looks busy can easily become busy by virtue of perception. People tend to have more trust in a business that looks like it has a strong customer base (regardless of whether or not they actually do).

Pay the money and have real business cards made. Don't print them yourself on your computer. Homemade business cards look and feel cheap and give the message that you are just getting into the business or treat it only as a hobbyist. People want to feel that they are taking their equipment to a place that is professional and dedicated. The same idea applies to signage. Professional signage = professional image.

Repair tickets and sales receipts that are sequentially numbered and printed with your business name is another of those little things that give a strong impression.

Become a legitimate business. Get a resale tax certificate, employer identification number (EIN) and occupational license (where applicable).

Take the time to listen to your customers' needs and assure them that you are capable of repairing their equipment. No technician can repair every item or even get every part they may need. But if you are confident and know what you are doing it will show.

Finally, try to become authorised to perform warranty repairs for at least one brand of electronic equipment. If a manufacturer trusts you to do repairs on their behalf how do you think your customers will perceive you?

But be aware that image will only get you so far. If you want to keep those new customers you need to be able to produce results and stand behind your work.

Jestine Yong- *What do you think- if you focus your repair business only on the area that is nearby your company, will this repair business last long?*

Steve: I think a lot depends on the area. In our area we likely would be able to survive with only local customers. But building a business that actually flourishes is about safety nets and strategy, not only hard work and brute force. You need to be able to stretch out and have other work to get by on when regular walk-in business slows down for whatever reason.

Jestine Yong- *Do you use any technical management software to help in your company accounting? If yes, could you elaborate how good is the software you are using?*

Steve: No. We still use the old fashion method: Pen and paper.



Jestine Yong- *Do you give credit terms to your customer or purely accepting cash after the repair work is done?*

Steve: We extend credit only in rare and special cases. We do, however, accept multiple forms of payment (cash, credit card, debit cards and checks), which makes it easier for the customer to pay when they are ready to pick up repairs or make a purchase. Note that we only accept checks for service calls (and from some of our wholesale accounts), in which cases people are much less likely to give you a bad check.

Jestine Yong- *Let's assume that your repair business is full of competition. What do you have to do to give yourself an edge over your competitors?*

Steve: This is a cutthroat industry. You have to diversify. If you limit yourself too narrowly you will have a much harder battle ahead of you. Give people reasons to walk through your door and spend money with you. Retail sales can be a nice boost to walk-in traffic. Even if they don't buy anything, at least they've come in and have become more aware of you and are more likely to remember you when they do need your services or products.

Parts stock is also important. We sell a lot of parts over the counter. Cables, connectors, components, TV lamps and things like that get people to come to you: especially if you have them in stock. Building stock can take time. We try to order extra stuff with most of our parts orders. It saves on shipping costs and allows us to take care of repairs faster. In

general, the faster you perform repairs, the faster the customer comes to pick it up when it is done.

We also offer a pick-up and delivery service (service calls) for an extra charge and that gets us a lot more of the bigger money jobs than we would otherwise get. A lot of people just don't have a way to get their large TV to the shop on their own.

Jestine Yong- *Can you share with us some mistakes or the bad experiences to avoid in your business?*

Steve: One mistake that can come back to bite you – as tempting as it may be - is to allow customers to prepay for a job. It's one thing to have them pre-pay for a special order part but, if you accept full payment (especially on bigger money jobs) up front the customer tends to be more upset if something ends up preventing the job from being completed than if you accepted only a small portion up front. Plus it hurts much less to refund only the price of the part than the total of the bill. This is also an example of how having lots of parts in stock can make things easier on yourself. Sometimes you have to actually repair something to be able to give a 100% sure estimate to the customer.

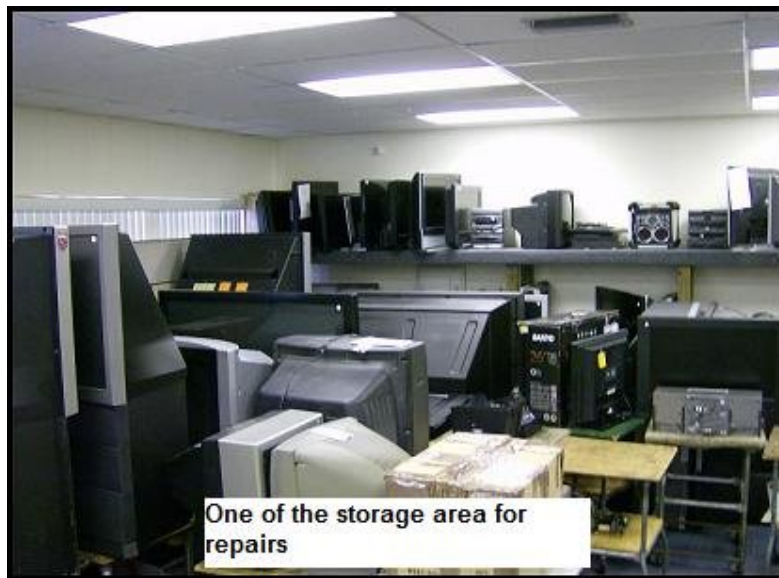
Show the customer that their equipment (especially flat panel TVs) is working BEFORE they leave with it. It only takes for them to pack it in their car wrong or lose their grip for the screen to get damaged. If a TVs ever does come back with a cracked screen you want them to have seen it operating before they left your shop with it. This mistake cost me a lot of money one time.

Another tempting mistake to avoid is trying to grow too quickly. You don't want to overextend yourself and end up with a bunch of upset customers. Worse yet, EX-customers. Grow should be at a careful pace. Give new accounts and warranty contracts time to manifest before piling on too much more. Too much work (or over-spending) can be as damaging as too little if you aren't prepared to handle the load.

Jestine Yong- *If I want to start a business like yours, what is the first step I need to take?*

Steve: First you must sharpen your skills and broaden your knowledge of electronics. Get a job at another repair shop for a while (I've worked for several). One of the best ways to learn how the business works is to become a part of an existing team. In fact, I learned more about electronics repair and how the business works during the first 6 months of

my first job at a real repair shop than I had on my own during the two years prior. That says a lot for the hands-on repair shop environment. You don't get that kind of insight from books.



Jestine Yong- *Is having the right mindset important in launching an electronic repairing business?*

Steve: Certainly. That is true with any business. Do what you love. But you have to possess an understanding of the trade before you can make a successful business of it. Not every technician would even want to be an owner. You often have to be willing to work more hours for less pay. It's part of the process of growing.

Jestine Yong- *What are your future plans? Long term plans?*

Steve: Our immediate goal is simply to continue on our path of growth and consumer confidence. We plan to get company shirts and magnetic truck signs made soon to help strengthen our image. On the long term, however, we'd love to increase our repair workload, reduce our turn-around time on repairs and increase the retail aspect of the business to the point where we need even more space and more technicians. We'd like to become authorised for warranty repairs on more brands than the seven we have now. With continued blessings, patience and a lot of hard work, hopefully we will become the powerhouse repair center that Lakeland, Florida needs.

Jestine Yong- *What is your final message to our readers?*

Steve: If you want to repair electronics, learn all you can about electrical and electronic theory, how circuits work and what role the basic components play. Obtain – and learn how to use – the basic test equipment. Try to keep up with the new technologies. Make friends in the business. Never stop learning. And most importantly, no matter what you choose to do in life, do the best you can.

Thank you very much for your time, Mr. Yong, and for the kindness you've shown us by sharing our story with your members. I wish the best of luck to you and each of your readers.

P.S. I'm sorry to end this on a sad note but I, regretfully, wish to inform your readers that fellow technician and my best friend of nearly 20 years (who was featured along with me in the first interview that Mr. Yong conducted of Mid-Florida Electronics), Mr. Don Farlow, was involved in a serious auto accident from which he passed away on Sept 12th, 2008. Don is owed a debt of gratitude by this company and by me personally. He was a great friend and a great technician. And without his willingness to be a part of it, this company probably would have never been founded.

Thank you, Don. You are loved and missed. God bless.

Jestine Yong- You have my deepest sympathies on the death of your friend Don. Hope you will cherish the memories of the times you spent together. Thanks again for the sharing. All the best to you.

Interview With Laura (Wife Of Steve French)



Jestine Yong- *How are you Laura?*

Laura- I'm doing fine. Thank you for asking.

Jestine Yong- *I understand that you are working with your husband Steve, may I know what is your role in the company?*

Laura- My primary function is to handle the accounting end of the business. I also assist with customer and vendor contacts as necessary.

Jestine Yong- *How long have you been in helping your husband?*

Laura- Ever since we acquired ownership of the company in October 2009.

Jestine Yong- *Do you know how to repair?*

Laura- Absolutely not!

Jestine Yong- *Can you please tell us the advantages of working with your Husband?*

Laura- Well, first off, Mr. Yong, we get to spend time together. He frequently works late doing service calls, so the times I'm able to be in the shop give us bonus hours. I'm proud to work alongside my husband as we strive to provide dependable service and a unique electronics sales floor; all at a reasonable price.

JestineYong- *How about the challenges and problems?*

Laura- We don't have any husband/wife problems at the shop. There are the occasional customers, however, who tend to be intent on spreading their bad moods in our direction.

Jestine Yong- *Can you share with us the mistakes you made or the bad experiences in the company?*

Laura- It's a learning process for all of us; my husband and I, and our two techs; Russell and Ed. I still have a lot to learn about the "workings" of the shop. All the guys are always available and willing to help me and answer my questions. The way they remember all the hundreds of units that come through our shop is unbelievable.

Jestine Yong- *What advice would you give to a wife who wishes to help out their husband in running the repair business?*

Laura- LET HIM RUN IT! Steve knows the electronic business inside and out. I wouldn't even pretend to be able to handle all the steps involved in the processing of repairs, sales, warranty contracts, parts, repairs, retail items, etc. that he oversees. I handle the banking and some phone calls and wait on customers and often take care of shipping. I'm very much "support" staff at our shop and I am so okay with that.

Jestine Yong- *What is your future plan for this company?*

Laura- We will continue to treat our customers with fairness and dependability. I would love for us to own our own space someday, instead of renting. We are very fortunate, though, to be in a busy strip mall with great "neighbours".

Jestine Yong- *What is your final message to our readers?*

Laura- Get out there, take a chance, don't be afraid to dream; you'll be in for the ride of your lifetime!

Jestine Yong- *Thanks Laura!*

Laura- You are welcome!

Interview With Ed (Staff Of Steve French)



Jestine Yong- *How are you Ed?*

Ed- Fine, thank you.

Jestine Yong- *How's life as an electronic repairer?*

Ed- It is very satisfying but with some frustration.

Jestine Yong- *Could you explain to us what do you mean by frustration in your career?*

Ed- For example, service manuals: When you can find service manuals these days they are in electronic form (usually PDF files) and they are hard to read unless you zoom way in. But then when you zoom in it is difficult to follow the traces because most of it is off screen so you have to constantly shift and scroll. Things are getting more and more complex and finding the information and parts you need is getting more and more difficult.

Jestine Yong- *How long have you been in the Electronic Repair line?*

Ed - 35+ years.

Jestine Yong- *Wow! That was very long. Did you have any experience working in a corporate line, or any other jobs you've done before other than electronic repairing?*

Ed- Laboring, carpentry and concrete construction.

Jestine Yong- *Why do you choose electronics since your previous fields was not related to electronics?*

Ed- I graduated from Tampa Technical Institute (Tampa, Florida USA) in 1970. But President Nixon was cutting government contracts and there seemed to be no jobs in any electronics fields, so I went into construction for about 5 years and enjoyed the work. I was finally able to start at a TV repair shop at age 25 and have been at it ever since.

Jestine Yong- *What are the Electronic Equipment that you can repair?*

Ed- I can repair most kinds of consumer electronics.

Jestine Yong- *Do you learn the repair on your own or from a Guru/courses/forum/books and etc?*

Ed- I attended a technical school for electronics.

Jestine Yong- *What is your education background?*

Ed- High school and 4 years of technical schooling.

Jestine Yong- *How much time do you spend on equipment before you give up? Why do you give up?*

Ed- It depends on how much the equipment can be replaced for. I also have to give up if parts are no longer available to repair it or if I can't pin the problem down to a specific component or board.

Jestine Yong- *What's your favourite test equipment and why do you like it?*

Ed- DVM / DMM (Digital Volt Meter / Digital Multi-Meter). I like it because with it I can pin down the problem most of the time. My second favorite is the oscilloscope.

Jestine Yong- *What was the last electronic book and magazine you read?*

Ed- Popular Electronics Magazine

Jestine Yong- *Do you do your own R & D to find a better solution in electronic repair, for example like coming out with your own way of solving a particular circuit problem?*

Ed- Yes. Even when service literature is available it very seldom addresses the specific problem at hand.

Jestine Yong- *Generally on average how many types of electronic equipment you can repair in a day?*

Ed- 3-5 and it is usually an assortment of different kinds of equipment, such as TVs, compact stereos, receivers, amps, karaoke machines, guitar amps, PlayStation 2 consoles and so on.

Jestine Yong- *Do you meet regularly with other electronic repairers to discuss about electronic problems and solutions?*

Ed- No. We talk about repairs amongst each other at the shop.

Jestine Yong- *What are the biggest problems you are facing in the Electronic repair line nowadays?*

Ed- Availability of service literature and parts.

Jestine Yong- *Can you share with us the mistakes you made or the bad experiences in your repairing career?*

Ed- A nail had gotten into the sole of my right boot one time and was contacting my foot. It was grounding my body to the concrete floor I was on, and allowed me to get shocked from the hot side of a power supply I was working on.

Another time I fired up a TV without the CRT connected. I accidentally let the HV anode cap arc to the metal ring around the edge of a desk I was using for as a work bench. The high voltage then arced right to my crotch and caused an RF burn. For about a month that experience came to my mind every time I plug anything in to the AC power.

Jestine Yong- *Have you come across any electronic equipment that you can't repair? And how do you plan to solve it?*

Ed- Yes. If I cannot get service literature or schematics and can't see a similar circuit in my head then repair may be more difficult. I ask other techs when I get stuck on a repair.

Jestine Yong- *What advice would you give to a beginner who wishes to join this trade?*

Ed- Learn all you can about how AC and DC electricity works.

Jestine Yong- *What is your future plan for your electronic repair career?*

Ed- Survive through and keep up with all the new types of TV, audio and video technologies.

Jestine Yong- *What is your final message to our readers?*

Ed- This is a very rewarding field to be in. Every day is a challenge. Good luck!

Jestine Yong- *Thanks Ed!*

Ed- Thank you.

Did you find this report useful?

I hope you found this report useful. **Feel free to pass it on to a friend or colleague.** I've put a lot of time and effort into writing this free report.

Thanks and have a nice day!



Jestine Yong

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