

eCycling

Dos and Don'ts

COMPUTER RECYCLING



you go to delete it. You should delete it even if you intend to throw it away. If you give some thought to where you put the stuff you store on your computer, this is a lot easier. Pictures, music, documents, e-mail and accounting records should be put somewhere on purpose, not simply scattered anywhere by accident.



How much stuff do you have?

Making a backup can be difficult when you have lots of stuff.

A typical hard drive can hold tens of thousands of files and billions and billions of bytes of information. But copying all that onto a back-up tape or multiple CDs or even DVDs can take lots of time and special software and skill. If there's a lot of it and it's important, you'll probably need help.

Even if you make backups regularly of the most important stuff (and you should), **retiring a computer takes extra**

planning. Take a regular inventory of what you have, pay attention to what programs you use and what information they work on. Can you find the disks for all the software you installed? How

about the license and registration keys? If you are getting a new computer, but not replacing your printer, it may be important to locate those driver disks that you haven't seen for years.



What are you worried about?

Computers have become central to our lives. We store all sorts of information on them. Some may be confidential. When you dispose of your computer, all that information will still be there unless you delete it. The problem is that even if you delete all you can find, some may still be hiding there!

If you have used your computer for purposes that may have included storing personal information about you or others, it may be practically impossible to locate and delete it all. If you have installed programs that access confidential data, you can't be 100% sure that copies are not still on your hard drive. Even your e-mail address book includes personal information.

If you are giving your computer to a friend or relative, you can't be sure where it will end up later. If you can't be sure your computer has any private information or you are very afraid about something turning up in tomorrow's newspaper, it's better to be safe than sorry and keep or destroy the hard drive.

However, a PC without a hard drive is practically useless to anyone. In addition to your stuff, a hard drive stores the computer's Operating System (OS) – an expensive and complex program that makes your computer work. There are steps you can take to preserve the OS and save the hard drive for the next person that could benefit from your old computer. This comes with some risk, but the risk is very, very small.

The best time to prepare for recycling your computer is when it's new. Create an image of your hard drive before you start using it. When you're ready to trade-up, simply replace what's on your hard drive with the image. That takes care of erasing your stuff and gives the next person a useful system.



Where does it all go?

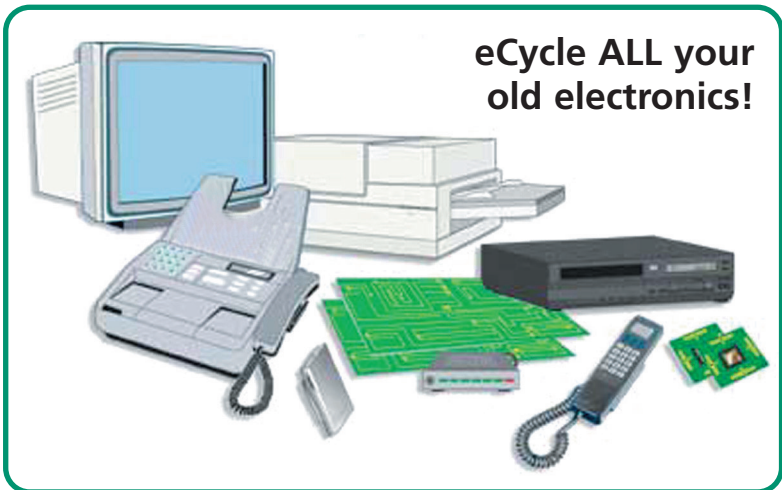
Electronic gadgets have gotten much smaller, but they **still contain lots of material that can harm the environment** if disposed of improperly. Most last longer than we're willing to use them. There are so many of them, and new ones replace the old so fast, that it has become a real problem just to get rid of all



the eWaste we generate every year. It is no longer reasonable or responsible to simply put your old PC, printer, phone or fax machine in the dumpster.

Responsible eWaste processors find recyclable components in most of what they receive. When they get computers in working order, they can get them into the hands of someone that can use them. Not everyone needs the latest-greatest. The older your computer is, the less likely it is to be valuable to anyone. Same story if it doesn't work. Just remove the hard drive and recycle the rest. Dot matrix printers, thermal fax machines, bag phones, modems and old monitors aren't worth much to anyone anymore. All these should be taken to a recycler and kept out of landfills.

If you have a decent working computer with all the parts it came with, follow these **Dos** and **Don'ts** to keep it out of a landfill or to give it a second chance to be useful to someone else.



eCycling Dos and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Backup everything. The only sure way to get it all is to make an image of the hard drive. Several free and commercial utilities exist. Ask an expert if you need help. Don't forget settings, shortcuts, e-mail, license & activation keys.	Don't put eWaste in the trash!
Use a software program to wipe the hard drive. We recommend the free utility: DBAN. It runs from a floppy disk so your computer doesn't even have boot-up to use it.	Don't leave the hard drive in a computer that doesn't work. It can be installed in a working computer and all your stuff copied to a working system.
If you want someone to use your old computer, remember to include all the cords, cables, keyboard, mouse, power cubes, manuals, software disks, registration/license information, speakers, power cubes, keys, etc.	Don't expect a computer more than 5 years old to be useful to anyone. Simply remove and/or destroy the hard drive before recycling it.
Reinstall the OS & software from a factory supplied 'Recovery' disk if available, or with an image you made when the system was new. Start by wiping the hard drive first using DBAN.	Don't simply try to delete everything using your computer's delete or format functions. Even if you delete stuff from the 'Trash bin' lots of personal information remains.
Keep a record of what you donate to charities for tax purposes; get a receipt from the recycling processor.	Don't let eWaste accumulate. It's better to recycle sooner than later.
Use your PC manufacturer's recycling program if they have one. Dell, HP and others offer this service for free.	Don't delete, destroy or donate anything important until you confirm your data has been copied to and is usable on your new system.
Consider making a donation to a charitable recycling processor; commercial processors typically charge a fee – just include the cost in the value of owning your computer.	Don't simply throw away backup disks or tapes – they have information that can be recovered too. Demagnetize, overwrite or destroy backups that you no longer need.

*This information is provided to you
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