

“Going green” is the new trend that is sweeping the nation. People throughout the United States are doing their part to reduce their imprint on the earth. Whether it is buying a hybrid car to reduce pollution or just something as simple as not letting the water run while you are brushing your teeth: The nation more than ever is realizing the need to reduce our consumption and actually doing something about it.

Recycling programs have been around for decades and have increased substantially over the past years. For some who do not know what recycling is it “means to take a product or material at the end of its useful life and turning it into a usable raw material to make another product (earth911.org).” It is our duty as humans to take care of our planet. That means we have to reduce our consumption, reuse what we can and find environmentally friendly ways to dispose of our waste.

Many people recycle paper, glass, and cans, but what people do not know is that you can also recycle all of your old and used electronics. “Technology has revolutionized our lifestyle through telephones, radios, TVs, computers and cell phones. However, the brisk pace of technology means these devices become obsolete quickly (earth911.org).” According to the EPA, nearly 3.2 million tons of electronics, including computers, are discarded every year (kab.org). It is extremely important that we dispose of these electronics properly, not only because there are laws against it, but because they contain dangerous elements like lead and mercury that can seep into the ground and contaminate our water supply and soil. The EPA estimated that the amount of fossil fuels and chemicals required to manufacture one computer is about nine times the weight of the actual computer itself. By recycling computers we can reduce the need for more manufactured computers which in turn will reduce pollution. Also, by reusing the precious metal found in computers we can reduce the need for mining the earth for such metals. Disassembling computers, reuse what we can, properly disposing of what is useless, and through donation programs we can significantly reduce our imprint on our sacred earth.

When the time comes to retire a computer and invest in a new one, we often just throw the entire computer into the garbage. What many people don’t know is that many of those parts can still be used even if the CPU isn’t up to speed. The monitor, mouse and keyboard can still be used with a new computer. By reusing these parts you can also save money when you’re buying a computer, and saving money is always a good thing. Here are lists of some mainstream computer companies that will dismantle your computer for you:

Apple	Dell
Epson	Gateway
Hewlett Packard	IBM
Lexmark	NEC

If getting rid of your entire computer is what you decide, make sure to dispose of it properly. There are hundreds of places where you could drop off your old computer and know that it will be disposed correctly. One large company that will dispose of an old

computer for you is Staples. Staples will accept all brands of computers. For a small \$10 fee, which will cover handling, transport, product disassembly and recycling, Staples will dispose of your old computer. They work with Eco International, who uses industry-leading standards for data destruction and disassembles the equipment into its component parts for environmentally responsible recycling (staples.com). Other major recycling companies that provide this service are:

E-Tech Recycling	Genesis Recycling
IBM PC Recycling System	Intercon Solutions
Back Thru the Future Microcomputers, Inc.	Envirocycle Inc.
Total Reclaim	United Recycling Industries

The City of Chicago as has a great recycling company that will take your computer off your hands for no charge. You just simply have to drop it off. The City of Chicago recycling drop off center for electronics is located at 1150 N. North Branch Chicago, IL 60622, two blocks east of the Kennedy Expressway at Division St. They take all electronics you wish to dispose of. Check them out at <http://www.cityofchicago.org>. Other good websites that will assist you in local recycling programs are:

- <http://www.illinoisrecycles.org>
- <http://www.chicagorecycling.org>

Properly disposing of your computer is not your only option. If your computer is still in good condition, but you find a new computer that is more up to speed, don't throw your old computer away. This especially goes out to large companies as well as small. When companies update their computers they find themselves with tons of out-of-date computers that have no place to go. It is our social responsibility to help others in our country that are less fortunate than us. There are thousands of schools across the nation that still do not have computers that children can use and learn from. By simply donating the computers that you no longer need, we can be improving our future's education. Here are a few organizations that help place your retired computer with a suitable home.

Share the Technology	National Cristina Foundation
Recycles.org	CompuMento
Roboot Canada	Reconnect

To find other local non-profit organizations willing to take you computer donations go to <http://www.usedcomputers.com>. They have a list of different organization that are in need of used computers and electronics. Don't just waist your electronics, put them to good use.

For "Ten Tips for Donating a Computer" go to <http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/hardware/archives/page9675.cfm>

Other helpful websites about computer recycling and donation:

<http://www.computerhope.com>

<http://www.computerrecyclingusa.com>

<http://www.kab.org>

<http://www.techsoup.org>