



THE HOT SEAT {OUR BLOG}

Tips to Reduce Your e-Waste

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Are you one of the average consumers who replaces her cell phone every nine months? In a world of constant electronic upgrades, we're generating more than 3.2 million tons of e-waste in the U.S. each year alone, according to the EPA. But it doesn't have to be this way -- your e-waste can be reduced, reused, or recycled. Here's how:

Choose green electronics

In the market to buy a new electronic gadget? Choose one that will generate less waste:

- Visit Greenpeace International's Guide to Greener Electronics, ranking the top 18 manufactures of personal computers, mobile phones, TVs and games consoles according to their policies on toxic chemicals, recycling and climate change.
- Scan through the myGreenElectronics searchable database for green products. (This site is loaded with solutions -- including tips on how to fix and extend the life of your electronics.)
- Find products that have the ENERGY STAR logo, indicating that they are energy efficient, which will help you save on your bills, too.

Reuse or sell your e-waste; Don't let it gather dust

- Donate your working e-waste to a friend or a charity. If, for instance, your old cell phone is still usable, consider donating it to a good cause. Cell phone donation locations, programs and drop-off sites are available nationwide. Recycle with CollectiveGood and support regional charities. To make recycling easy, CollectiveGood has drop-off sites like Staples stores, or you can send them your phone via mail.
- If you feel like making a little money by selling your e-waste, consider listing it on ebay and be part of the Rethink Initiative, educating and enabling members to take action to reduce e-waste.

Locate local recycling options

Recycle on the go. Download Earth911's iPhone app iRecycle, or visit TIA E-cycling Central to find the nearest recycling center accepting select recyclable items -- like compact fluorescent light bulbs, computers, phones -- based on your zip code in the U.S.

Join a recycling incentive program

Need a little incentive to recycle, like earning points that you can redeem for stuff? As a member of RecycleBank, you can earn points by participating in a curbside recycling program. The weight of your cart will determine how many points you earn, redeemable from over 1,500 partners such as Bed, Bath & Beyond, Whole Foods, CVS Pharmacy, etc. To date, the material recycled by the households they service has enabled RecycleBank to save cities tens of millions of dollars annually in landfill disposal fees, save over 1.5 million trees, and save millions of gallons of oil.

Participate in manufacturer and retail recycling

The Electronics Takeback Coalition has an online list of manufacturers that have a voluntary takeback program.

For instance, Apple's recycling program offers a free computer takeback program with the purchase of a new Mac.

Sony has a GreenFill free recycling program with collection boxes in retail stores nationwide.

You can also take back electronics to popular retail stores like Best Buy -- visit the site and select your state from the drop-down menu to view program details for your area.

Staples stores offer free rechargeable battery recycling to customers in partnership with the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation -- on top of their free recycling program.

Take it from Kermit, who figured out it isn't so hard to be green after all, "I am green and it'll do fine, it's beautiful and I think it's what I want to be."

Reena De Asis is a MarCom professional with experience in the corporate, agency and non-profit sectors. As an enthusiastic, resource-savvy and creative solution leader, she embodies the innovative main character in Amelie. When she's not initiating a corporate volunteer program or organizing a renovation mural project, Reena immerses herself in live music or savoring chocolate nuggets of wisdom. Words to live by: "My life is my message," by Mahatma Gandhi. Her passion is www.laworks.com