

Information and Cybersecurity Awareness

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Dispose of your e-waste responsibly

'You can't just throw it away'

Old or broken computers, printers, laptops, monitors, cellphones, peripherals and external hard drives need to be properly disposed of.

Introduction

By simply throwing away your old electronic hardware you could cause damage to the environment and perhaps also break several laws. You also have to consider the data that was stored on the device, and what it would mean if that data was to be recovered by nefarious people.

South African laws that govern e-waste include:

- National Environmental Management: Waste Act of 2008
- The Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI)

Computers and other connected devices contain vital information, including passwords, registration numbers, account information, addresses, telephone numbers

and a host of other private information. Your hard drive is a goldmine for identity thieves and it is important to use proven methods to wipe this data from existence before disposing of devices. Simply throwing the devices or their hard drives away could potentially cause more harm than good.

How to protect yourself

Proper disposal of your hardware is not difficult, but it does require some effort on your part. A brief summary of proper techniques to use when disposing of e-waste is given below:

Backup your data:

- If the device is in working condition, make copies of your important information.
- Use USB drives, external hard drives, cloud services or a new computer to store your data.
- The ITS Department offers several cloud options that can be used for backups and will assist you with setting them up.

Sanitise your drives:

- Simply deleting data is not enough. It can be recovered.
- Use specialised software that will securely wipe your drives. Several free options are available.
- If you really want to safeguard your data, physical destruction of hard drives is an option.
- You can also contact companies to securely destroy your hard drive for you, and then provide you with proof in the form of a certificate of destruction.
- Recycle, donate or sell:
- Recycle, donate, or resell your computer to stop harmful toxins from entering the environment.
- If you opt to recycle it, you will find that several manufacturers have programs for recycling computers and their components.
- Many charities and non-profit organisations will accept donations of certain types of hardware, which is then refurbished and given to people who can use it.

SEE MORE

 [How to Dispose of Old Computers \(YouTube\)](#)

READ MORE

 [5 steps to the legally-compliant disposal of e-waste](#)

[How to Dispose of Hardware](#)

[Best Practices for Secure, Responsible Disposal of Computers & Devices](#)

DO MORE

 [Be responsible to the planet and your data](#)