

Computer Recycling

British Industry throws out over 1,000,000 computers every year because they will not run the very latest software and it is cheaper for companies to buy new computers than to upgrade old ones.

The total annual waste arising from computers, workstations and systems in the UK has been estimated to be in excess of 126,000 tonnes.

Until 1995 approximately 6 million pieces of electronic scrap was dumped in UK landfill sites annually.

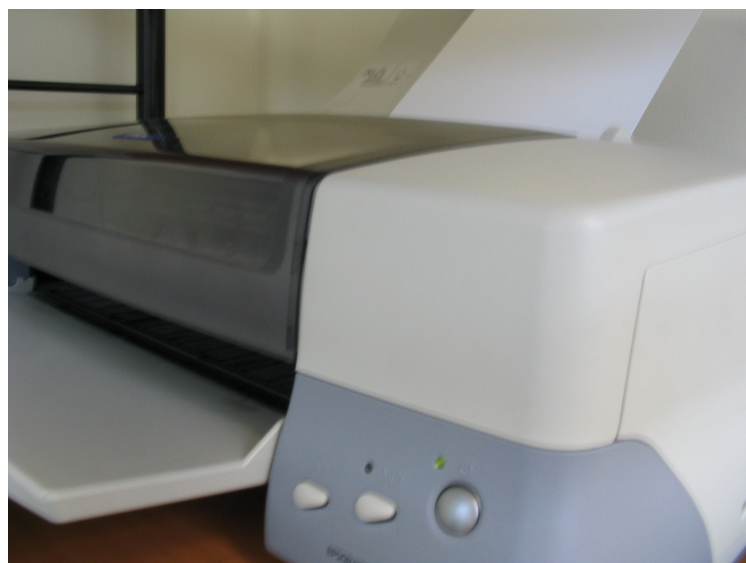
Printed circuit boards and their associated components contain precious metals such as gold, silver, palladium, platinum, rhodium and tantalum – all of which can be reclaimed.

Materials such as aluminium, copper and plastics also have value as long as they are separated and sorted.

Parts, including printed circuits, connectors, magnets, fans and plastic enclosures, which previously went straight to landfill can be separated for recycling.

Not all electronic scrap is so readily recyclable.

Cathode ray tubes (CRTs), pose a major difficulty. The phosphor-based coating used to provide the luminescence contains heavy metals and other toxins, while the glass itself is loaded with lead and barium.



Recycling a specific design of CRT with known constituents is relatively straightforward, but finding a process that will handle very large quantities of CRTs of varying age and specification is not so easy. As a result over 30,000 tonnes a year currently go into UK landfill.

Contacts and Links

Recyclers in Your Area

<http://www.wasteonline.org.uk/resources/InformationSheets/ComputerRecyclersRefurbishers.htm>

Waste online provide a list of some computer recyclers by region.

Recycle-IT!

<http://www.recycle-it.uk.com/index.htm>

Pass computers on to charities, voluntary groups and educational organisations.

Computers for Charity

<http://www.computersforcharity.org.uk/>

Tel: 01288 361199

Collect redundant computer equipment free of charge and recycle it for use by charities, voluntary organisations and schools throughout the UK.

Computer Aid International

<http://www.computeraid.org/>

The world's largest non-profit supplier of computers to developing countries.

Recycling-It

www.recycling-it.co.uk

Pass on computers to charities, voluntary groups and educational organisations.

Cambridge Computer Recycling

www.cambridge-computer-recycling.co.uk/

Recycling unwanted machines to provide cheap second hand parts. Collect for free if possible.

UK IT Recycling

www.UKITrecycling.com

Family run business based in the West Midlands will collect in England and Wales.

Industry Council for Electronic Equipment Recycling

www.icer.org.uk

Develop long term strategies to manage and minimise waste from electronic and electrical equipment.

