

PalmBeachPost.com

 PRINT THIS

THE GREEN GIRL

The Green Girl's Guide to e-cycling your e-waste

By Kristi Martin Moyer

Friday, April 18, 2008

Do you know what the life-span of your computer is?

Probably just two to five years. In that time, you'll probably change your cellphone, computer monitor, speakers and iPod, too.



[Post your comments on this story below](#)

We're awash in technological waste, called e-waste, which is toxic, non-biodegradable and a huge problem.

The Environmental Protection Agency says we tossed out more than 500 million computers from 2000 to '07, with only a small fraction being recycled. Not only is that a lot of waste headed to the landfill, but computer monitors, older televisions and other electronics contain lead, as well as other elements that require special handling. These toxic materials can also present

Share This Story
health and environmental problems.

So what can you do to stay wired and wise?

First, practice computer life extension. You often can reuse your monitor, keyboard, speakers or mouse without sacrificing your upgrade. If you do buy an entirely new system, donate your old computer and its peripherals. You can do this with most electronics, as long as they're not completely obsolete.

Many companies have formed partnerships with local schools or nonprofit organizations across the country to collect computers, cellphones and televisions.

The National Cristina Foundation donates recycled computers and other electronic items to disabled and economically disadvantaged children and adults (Go to www.cristina.org to be matched with a local organization that can use your donations.)

If your electronic components are still working, you can drop them off for resale at Habitat for Humanity's Re-Store at 1225 S. Military Trail in West Palm Beach (call 561-304-0222 first) or call the

Resource Depot (561-882-0090) for information on the current drop-off policy.

Your second option is to recycle the product. E-cycling, as defined by the EPA, is the recycling of electronic equipment to help protect the environment by ensuring that e-waste is properly disassembled and or reused, hopefully never to see a landfill.

In Palm Beach County, you can drop off your e-waste to a transfer station, where parts will be recycled. For sites near you, go to www.swa.org and click on hazardous waste.

So the next time you upgrade to the latest technology, do it the green way by donating your old gear or locating a local e-cycling center near you.

Supplemented by staff members of Pine Jog Environmental Education Center, West Palm Beach, in association with Florida Atlantic University. For more information, go to www.pinejog.fau.edu. Pine Jog does not endorse the products or companies listed. References are for information only.

Vote for this story!

Find this article at:

http://www.palmbeachpost.com/search/content/home_garden/epaper/2008/04/12/axh_green_girl_0419.html

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.