

# Don't Bury The Mouse!

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The Decision Maker's Guide  
*to properly disposing of*  
your Technology Assets

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**DISCLAIMER**

The information provided here in this guide is only to be used as a reference. ITreborn takes no responsibility for any loss or damages incurred from using the information provided. You should always consult your management team before making any decisions.

## Will Your Car Park Look Like This?



Image source: <http://wasteline.wordpress.com/2010/02/18/new-ewaste-recycling-law-begins/>

E-waste is a serious problem in Australia. Recent government statistics indicate 15.7 million computers reached end of life in 2007/08 yet only 1.5 million were sent for recycling. It is believed that the remaining 14.2 million computers either ended up in landfill or stored somewhere for disposal at a later date.<sup>1</sup>

When it comes time to getting rid of your IT assets ... *will your company car park look like this? Or can your IT assets be 'reborn'?*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ewaste.com.au/ewaste-articles/computer-disposal-the-wrong-way-and-the-right-way/>

The challenge facing IT Managers today is finding appropriate methods to dispose of your IT assets that:

- Comply with current e-waste and health and safety legislation
- Minimise the risk of data security and data privacy breaches
- Maximise the ROI of your IT assets during their full life cycle

This guide has been written to help IT Managers like you make the best possible decision when disposing of your IT assets while focusing on these three areas.

We've split the guide into three main sections to make it easier to understand the decisions you need to make:

In **Section 1** you will find a discussion of the issues that you need to consider when disposing of your IT assets.

In **Section 2** you will find the many options available to you for IT disposal.

**Section 3** will reveal valuable information on how to choose an IT Asset Disposal Company that can take care of your requirements.

And lastly you will find a small section about our company to give you an idea of who we are and how we're helping companies to reduce Australia's e-waste problem.

Working through the guide section by section will give you the best possible understanding of all the issues surrounding IT asset disposal, but feel free to skip to a particular section if you have immediate concerns about that area.

***Let's get started!***

# 1 What Issues Do I Need to Consider When Disposing of My IT Assets?

In 2007, global research firm IDC released a report<sup>2</sup> on the most common issues that IT Managers are facing with regards to disposing of their IT assets:



- Data security
- Legal compliance
- Environmental footprint
- Contain costs
- Space saving
- Source of revenue

Let's take a look at these issues in greater detail so that you can be better informed when making your IT asset disposal decisions.

## 1.1 Data Security

Data Security is a major concern for organisations of all sizes. You need to be sure that any trace of your company's data has been wiped from the hard drives. The potential damages from breaches or losses of data in old IT assets could be enormous. Especially since such breaches are well publicised by the media.

Even digital photocopiers are a great source of data as every photocopier has a hard drive that stores documents for printing or emailing. If this hard drive isn't wiped properly,

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<sup>2</sup> IDC Top Asset Disposal Issues

those who know what they are doing can easily get access to sensitive information such as bank records, passport details and tax information.<sup>3</sup>

In one instance<sup>4</sup>, a data security expert from the United States managed to remove the hard drive from a photocopier that had been with the New York Police Sex Crimes division. Downloading a forensic software program from the internet, within 12 hours he was able to restore documents detailing domestic violence complaints and a list of wanted sex offenders as well as targets listed for police drug raids.

*Can you imagine the potential trouble your company would face if sensitive data leaked out through old computers?*

**Properly disposing of your IT assets should be a major priority for your organisation!**

If you decide to do it yourself then you need to know that the process of wiping a hard drive is slightly more complicated than deleting the files on your computer and/or reinstalling the operating system.

You need to use specialised software that will wipe all traces of the data from your computer. If you really want to be totally safe, then you can physically destroy the hard drives.

## **1.2 Legal Compliance**

In the USA and Europe there are specific laws that relate to IT asset disposal, but in Australia, unless you import computers, televisions, printers and computer products, the Product Stewardship Act 2011 does not apply to you<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Digital Photocopiers Loaded with Secrets:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/04/19/eveningnews/main6412439.shtml>

<sup>4</sup> Digital Photocopiers Loaded with Secrets

<sup>5</sup> National Waste Policy Fact Sheet:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/waste/ewaste/publications/pubs/fs-regulations.pdf>

Australia has also introduced interim standards for the collection, transport and recycling of end of life televisions and computers. You can get a copy of these interim standards by emailing [ewaste@environment.gov.au](mailto:ewaste@environment.gov.au) It is our understanding that they apply to companies that specifically deal in the collection, transport and recycling of end of life equipment and not companies that own the IT assets so while they are not directly applicable to you, if you use a third party IT Asset Disposal Company then you should inquire about their compliance with these standards.

You do, however, have to comply with the Privacy Act 1988 (cth) as this regulates how your personal information is handled. It covers:

- How your personal information is collected (e.g. the personal information you provide when you fill in a form)
- How it is then used and disclosed
- Its accuracy
- How securely it is kept
- Your general right to access that information.

You can review the National Privacy Act here:

<http://www.privacy.gov.au/aboutprivacy/snapshot>

Individual states and territories also have legislation governing information usage <sup>6</sup> and you should make sure you comply with those regulations also.

### **1.3 Environmental Footprint**

According to the Environmental Protection and Heritage Council of Australia<sup>7</sup>, in the 2007/2008 financial year approximately 15.7 million computers reached end of life in Australia yet only 1.5 million of them were recycled. That's an enormous amount of e-waste not being looked after properly.

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<sup>6</sup> State and Territory Privacy Laws – <http://www.privacy.gov.au/law/states>

<sup>7</sup> Computer Disposal – The Right and Wrong Way <http://www.ewaste.com.au/ewaste-articles/computer-disposal-the-wrong-way-and-the-right-way/>

There is a massive lack of awareness about the toxicity of the materials used in producing IT equipment and you can't simply throw out all of your computers with the rest of the office garbage.

If your company has made a commitment to reducing your carbon footprint then you'll need to consider the environmental issues surrounding the disposal of your IT assets.

### **1.4 Contain Costs**

Preparing your computers for disposal isn't just a simple case of unplugging them, removing labels and throwing them out.

As we've already discussed you need to ensure your computers are wiped clean of any data and then make sure that you dispose of them in a manner that complies with the relevant Australian legislation.

This is quite an involved process and you need to make sure that your company has the required resources and budget allocated to this enormous task.

Alternatively, you might like to consider using a third party IT Asset Disposal Company to reduce your costs with preparing your computers for disposal. These organisations have special intelligent processes, controls and security features in their practices and could probably save your organisation a lot of money.

### **1.5 Revenue Source**

Some of your IT equipment might be salvageable to the extent that others might be willing to purchase it. This will contribute towards recovering the costs of IT asset deployment, but in most cases the income raised from selling off assets is minimal.

The challenge you have as an IT Manager is to run careful tests on all of your assets to determine what is still usable and then work out what the market rates are for the equipment.

IT Asset Disposal Companies will be able to do this much more effectively for you, saving you time, money and energy. In most cases they will test your assets and determine the market value of your equipment. You may receive a payment for your stock.

## 2 What Are My Options for Disposal?



Now that you have a good idea about the sorts of issues you will be facing when disposing of your assets, here are your options.

### 2.1 *Donate to Not for Profits (NFPs)*

This is one of the most common forms of IT asset disposal, but it is one of the riskiest. While the title of the assets are passed on to the new owner, the responsibility and liability in case of a legal issue are not transferable, i.e. your company is still responsible for any breaches of data privacy or legal issues.

The other issue to consider is that NFPs might not want a donation of IT equipment because they may not have the infrastructure to support the new equipment. Most charities would appreciate the support of a cash value donation that could be derived from the value of your equipment.

If you are thinking of donating your assets to your favourite corporate charity then it might be best to work with a professional IT Asset Disposal Company (see section 2.7) which can ensure a smooth transition of the assets to the new owners. As well as this, they may be able to support your charity by purchasing your equipment and contributing a donation to your supported charity.

### 2.2 *Use of Municipal Waste Sites*

Another option most IT Managers consider is disposing of the assets themselves by dumping them at council recycling centres. With the introduction of the *Product Stewardship Act 2011* and the National Waste Policy there are a number of e-waste recycling centres available for you to choose from no matter where you are located.

For more information visit

<http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/waste/ewaste/publications/pubs/fs-regulations.pdf>

This can seem like a good idea if you have a low volume of computers but if you have a larger volume of assets then most of these sites will not accept your equipment.

You also have to be concerned with data security and compliance with data privacy legislation. Can you imagine the trouble you would be in if someone got access to your corporate data at the recycling centre?

### ***2.3 Store for Future Disposal***

A safe option that some IT Managers consider is to remove the assets from users' workstations and then place them in secured storage for disposal at a later date.

While this might seem like a good interim solution the reality is that non utilised assets will cost your company more as they depreciate over time and their resale value decreases. You also have to consider the costs of storage as well as potential occupational health and safety issues of leaving old equipment lying around the place.

### ***2.4 Resell Systems to Employees***

Selling systems to employees is a popular option for disposing of IT assets but requires the same amount of due diligence as when decommissioning the assets and preparing them for sale.

You need to keep in mind data security and privacy issues as well audit trails concerning your IT Asset Register. Then there's the entire sales process involved with selling the assets, which most organisations simply don't have the resources for.

If your organisation doesn't have such resources then you may like to consider using a third party IT Asset Disposal Company who are arm's length removed and can handle the entire process as a commercial, hassle free transaction.

## ***2.5 Return to Equipment Producers***

If you've leased your IT assets then it will be a simple case of contacting your IT asset vendor and arranging collection of all your assets.

Depending on your original contract with your vendor, you might need to prepare the machines for disposal first or perhaps they might take care of that on your behalf.

If you're stuck for resources in this area, working with a third party IT Asset Disposal Company might help you conduct an asset audit and sanitise your machines in preparation for collection.

Review your contractual obligations to find out exactly what your equipment producers can help you with.

## ***2.6 Use an IT Asset Disposal Company***

Using a professional, third party IT Asset Disposal Company is the preferred option for many IT Managers simply because these companies already have procedures and policies in place that address data privacy and collection issues.

They are also experienced in asset management and will be able to provide you with advice and insights on how best to structure your asset management processes to minimise fuss when disposing of your assets.

Some of the things they might be able to help you with are:

- Recovering retired systems and extending their lives through a remarketing effort, if possible
- Certified data wiping of your assets
- Asset audit and reporting
- Logistics surrounding the disposal of your equipment
- Compliance with occupational health and safety regulations
- Asset sales to employees
- A viable alternative to storage that maximises the resale value of your assets
- Recycling with zero impact on landfill by extracting all useable components that may be marketable to other industries.

Professional IT Asset Disposal Companies will be able to work with you to understand your needs and provide you with a complete A to Z solution to help you dispose of your assets in a cost effective and efficient manner. They bring intelligent processes, controls and security features in their hardware disposal practices that your organisation might not have access to.

In addition, using a third party IT Asset Disposal Company also provides you with a certificate of compliance to protect your organisation against business, legal and environmental risks.

If this is a viable option for your business then **Section 3** of this guide will show you exactly how to engage an IT Asset Disposal Vendor that you can trust to take care of your asset disposal needs.

## 3 How Do I Choose My IT Asset Disposal Company?

When you consider all of the issues surrounding disposal of your IT assets, and all the options you have of disposing them, it really makes sense to use a third party IT Asset Disposal Company.



Remember you are looking for a vendor you can trust to take care of your organisation's IT assets and the risks involved with not disposing of them properly can be disastrous.

So it's important to take the time to choose the best IT Asset Disposal Vendor based on your needs.

There are six main areas to look for.

### 3.1 *Business credentials*

First and foremost you need to take a good look at the company's business credentials and look specifically towards establishing a trust factor with them.

You need to pay attention to the following six areas:

1. Does their website look professional and provide you with the information you need? Is information easy to find? Do they make realistic claims?
2. Does the company hold relevant certifications such as ISO or environmental standards?
3. Does the company have an occupational health and safety statement?
4. Do they hold relevant insurances?

5. What third party suppliers (if any) does the company deal with in order to provide services to your organisation?
6. Financial solvency – does the company have any financial issues that might impact you doing business with them?

## 3.2 Logistics

This area is concerned with the logistical activities surrounding the movement of your assets from your organisation's site to the company's processing facility. Each of the sections here will help you reduce the risks involved during transportation.

### 3.2.1 Pre-Collection

1. Can they provide an estimate before collection?
2. What information will they need from you to provide an estimate? For example, basic hardware specifications, equipment type, condition, how many data wipes etc.

*To help you gather this information, we've included a Hardware Specifications Check List at the back of this guide that you can complete when you are looking for your prospective IT Asset Disposal Company*

### 3.2.2 Collection

For your own organisation you will need to provide details to prospective companies on:

1. Site access: parking issues, height or loading bay concerns, identification needed
2. Building access: stairs, lifts, etc.
3. How will the equipment be presented for collection? Boxed? Wrapped? Loose?
4. What time will you schedule the pickup?
5. Will all items be collected from the one location or multiple locations?
6. Do you have trolleys available?

### 3.2.3 Collection Security

Things you need to evaluate from the company are:

1. Will the goods be transferred directly to the processing facility or placed in a storage hub for collection at a later date?
2. If a storage hub will be used, where is it located?

### 3.3 Processing and Facilities

This section is concerned with protecting your assets until they are properly disposed of after data sanitisation and providing a solid audit trail throughout the entire process.

Here are some of the questions you need to ask potential IT Asset Disposal Companies:

#### 3.3.1 Processing

1. What processes are in place for them to handle data-bearing assets?
2. What levels of service do they offer in terms of asset auditing, collection, sanitisation and disposition?
3. How do they handle peripherals and accessories?
4. How will custody of the assets be transferred?
5. What is the company's data sanitisation process?
6. What data bearing device destruction procedures are in place?
7. What procedures are in place to ensure data bearing assets marked for destruction are kept separate from those marked for sanitisation?
8. How long will the processing take?
9. What debranding procedures are in place?
10. What procedures are in place for discovery of loose or separate data carrying devices found during processing?
11. How will the IT assets be disposed of?

### **3.3.2 Internal and External Site Security**

1. What level and type of security is available at the company's processing facility?
2. Are the facilities shared with any other organisation without significant physical segregation and access controls?
3. Does the data processing facility have controlled access for authorised staff only?
4. What procedures are in place for visitors?

### **3.3.3 Audit Records**

1. How are audit records maintained and communicated back to your organisation?
2. What procedures are in place to ensure audit records are still accessible should the company's records be affected by a disaster?
3. What reports/information will be received by your company upon completion of processing and disposal?

## **3.4 Waste Management**

After processing and sanitisation you need to gather information on how the company will dispose of your IT assets in an ethical and environmentally friendly manner. These questions will help reduce your risks:

1. What e-waste capabilities and/or facilities does the company have?
2. Do they hold relevant permits in relation to e-waste disposal?
3. What is the company's e-waste disposal procedure?
4. If using a third party provider to dispose of e-waste, what relevant permits and/or certifications does this third party provider have?

## **3.5 Re-Use or Re-Sale**

If your IT assets are not marked as e-waste and will be re-used either within your organisation or re-sold by the IT Asset Disposal Company, you need to find out what procedures are in place to do so. These questions will help you reduce your risk:

1. How will assets be tested to ensure they are functional?
2. What cleaning procedures are in place to ensure the assets are in a suitable state for sale?
3. How will assets marked for resale or disposal be recorded within the audit process?
4. What software licensing will be used when installing software on the machines?
5. What procedures are in place to provide a warranty?

### **3.6 On-Site Services**

Your organisation might have a policy in place that prevents IT assets from being removed from your premises until they are fully sanitised. If that is your organisation then you need to find out what on-site services are available from your prospective IT Asset Disposal Companies.

Remember, the vendor you choose needs to comply with your organisation's data policies, decommissioning process, and supplier management policies to ensure that risks associated with IT asset disposal are managed efficiently and minimised.

## About Our Company

Derek Wilson and Warren Boustead started ITreborn in October 2010 to help reduce Australia's e-waste problem.



**Derek Wilson**

Derek comes from an operations management background in the Auction and Valuation industry and Warren is an Information and Communications Technology professional who specialises in hardware recovery, and assessment and logistics. Together we use our combined expertise to assist our clients with their IT asset disposal needs.

Unlike other IT Asset Disposal Companies, we specialise in giving old computers a chance to be 'reborn'. Our full disposal procedure is designed to specifically retire your assets while minimising your environmental footprint.

We process all your IT assets according to sound environmental recycling standards. We typically work with companies that have 20+ seats and a strong commitment to green computing. If you have pledged to reduce your carbon footprint, then you'll definitely want to talk to us.



**Warren Boustead**

Some of our major clients include Bendigo Bank, Bayside Council, Coles, Colonial First State, Department of Justice, Maxxia, Infosys and Toyota, just to name a few.

We're also passionate about supporting the community and giving back through our contributions program where we donate \$2 of our own profits for every item sold.

Working with us means you'll help reduce Australia's e-waste, support our local community and maximise the ROI of your IT assets.

If your IT assets are ready for or close to retirement then **CALL US** to see how we can make life easier for you.



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## Hardware Specifications Check List

### Desktops, Servers and Laptops

Qty	Item Type (D/top, Server, Laptop)	Brand	Model	CPU Type (Xeon, Pentium, C2D etc.)	CPU Speed (GHz)	CPU Quantity	Memory Installed (RAM)	Hard Drive Capacity	Optic Drive (CD-re-writer, DVD re-writer etc.)	Windows Licence Sticker and type (XP, Vista etc.)	AC Adapter (Laptop Only) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Carry Bag (Laptop Only) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Monitors:

Qty	Brand	Model	Screen size	With Stand <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Any obvious damage (scuff marks, cracks, broken screen etc.)?