

Give Old Equipment a New Life

Donating, Recycling Benefits Everyone

US Chamber of Commerce
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Tech Tools

All across the country, small business owners help improve the quality of life in their communities in a variety of ways.

There is one area, though, where more can be done - closing the gap between those who have regular access to technology and those who don't. It sometimes seems that everyone has a computer and a cell phone - if not two or three of each. But, in reality, millions of Americans don't own or have regular access to these and other technological tools.

You can help close this digital divide just by changing how you get rid of your old equipment. If you're replacing computers and other electronics that are less than five years old, there's a good chance that those items can still be useful to nonprofit organizations, individuals, and families. Equipment that is more than five years old may actually cost more to refurbish than it's worth. So, instead of donating it, recycling is probably the best option.

Donating or recycling your old equipment doesn't have to cost money. It only takes a little bit of time and has the added communal benefit of reducing the amount of trash going to landfills and pollutants entering the air and decontaminating the water supply.

There are a growing number of companies, nonprofits, and other

groups that will take your old equipment and get it ready for its next incarnation - whether it's by refurbishing it for use as "new" for someone else, or by taking it apart so that the hazardous materials it contains can be reused or disposed of properly.

Many computer manufacturers also have recycling programs, typically involving a small fee on top of shipping and packaging costs. In some situations and locations, this may be your best and most convenient option.

Every piece of electronic equipment that you dump in the trash is a missed opportunity to give back to your community. With a little planning and effort, you can give others a chance to participate in and reap the benefits of our technological economy. And donations to IRS 501(c) charitable organizations may also be tax deductible.

It's great when you can help yourself while helping others.



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