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Electronic Waste and our Digitized World

Our societies are increasingly consumed and dependent on digital devices and electronic applications in all we do. From our cell phones, automobiles, clothes dryers, children's toys, to the medical, financial, education, aviation, agricultural sectors that function with electronics to deliver the products and services that markets demand. Electronic waste or e-Waste is the result of end-of-life of products, breakage, continued consumption, planned obsolescence, changing technologies, and inability to repair, and is documented as the world's fastest growing waste stream - generating globally approximately 60 million tons/annually, with the U.S. being the second largest producer.

Yet, e-Waste is a most valuable resource, estimated at \$60-90 billion/year for the precious metals and critical minerals it contains, including gold, nickel, copper, aluminum, palladium, etc, and all essential resources to power our digitized world. However, only 22% is formally recycled, resulting in serious environmental, social, and public health concerns on account of e-waste ending up in landfills and low-income communities. Recycling e-waste can help mitigate the need for primary mining and serves as an accelerated strategy to secure the critical minerals necessary for economic, industrial and commercial development throughout the world.

What Not and What To Do?

A [survey](#) of four thousand U.S. consumers uncovered common behaviors of inaction, due to privacy concerns and lack of information, as driving 39% of U.S. consumers to store unused devices at home. Only 1 in ten people opted for recycling and reselling, with 9% disposing it as trash. Do not throw electronics in the trash! In the U.S. the national chains, including [Staples](#), [Best Buy](#), [Walmart](#), accept electronics free of charge for recycling and often erase data content. Extending the life of electronics can reduce the amount of e-waste and provide refurbished products, while creating jobs and market affordability. Firms such as [Back Market](#) and [Gazelle](#) provide resell and purchase platforms for consumer electronics.

Recycling e-Waste can be straight forward and offers broad benefits for everyone from governments to industry, consumers and the Planet.

Montgomery County Services and other resources:

The Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station provides daily electronics recycling drop-off, located at the Recycling Drop-Off Area, at 16101 Frederick Road, Derwood, MD. For additional information, call 311, Customer Service Representative

during business hours.

National Resources:

Recycling Locator: [Earth911](https://earth911.com/), <https://earth911.com/>

Recycle Nation: <https://recyclenation.com/>

The Growing e-Waste Crisis: [The Growing e-Waste Crisis!](#)

The Drawer Problem: <https://theconversation.com/the-drawer-problem-why-so-many-of-us-cant-let-go-of-our-old-electronics-and-what-we-can-do-about-it-284710>