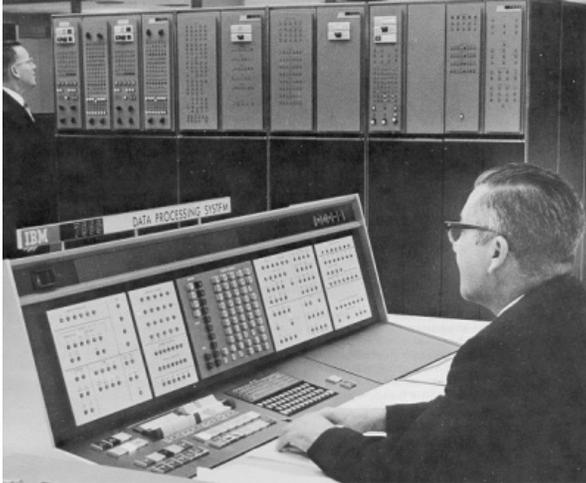


Reduce, Reboot, Recycle your Computer

Posted December 6th, 2007 by TimJFowler



If you've been using computers for more than a couple of years you are probably familiar with the 'Upgrade Cycle'. Thanks to [Moore's Law](#) and the tendency of software companies to write programs that need ever more computing power to run, it becomes necessary to buy a new computer every few years. We are all familiar with one end of the Upgrade Cycle, buying a new computer. I decided that it was finally time to get rid of a Pentium 90 laptop and a 486 PC. So, I found out how to responsibly recycle computers and other electronics.

I started with Google which led me to the [New Mexico Recycling Coalition](#). The NMRC website has a Recycling Directory which led me to the City of Santa Fe's Buckman Road Recycling Center which offers electronics and computer recycling for a \$.03/lb fee, which is cheaper than

the other local options. I chatted with the staff at BuRRT and found out that they send their electronics recycling to [Natural Evolution, Inc.](#) in Tulsa, OK. While, Tulsa isn't exactly next door, it's definitely in the Southwest, so I gave them a call to find out the last bits and bytes of computer recycling.

EcoNM: How did you get into electronics recycling?

Natural Evolution: We started by cleaning up an old garage full of parking meters which led us eventually to computer recycling. No businesses in our area were recycling electronics so we decided to give it a whirl.

EcoNM: What level of material processing do you perform and what processing is done elsewhere?

Natural Evolution: We dismantle computers and other electronics and then separate the parts. The components are then shipped off to several ISO-certified facilities throughout the U.S.A. for processing in a clean and environmentally responsible way.

EcoNM: What are the most valuable materials that can be recycled from an electronic device?

Natural Evolution: The majority of a computer or other electronic device can be recycled. Everything from metal and plastic cases, to copper wiring and circuit boards contain valuable and recyclable materials.

EcoNM: How much material do you divert from landfills?

Natural Evolution: We process 250,000 to 350,000 lbs of electronics per month, keeping those materials out of the waste stream.

EcoNM: How can people reduce the need to recycle electronics?

Natural Evolution: By asking the simple question "Do I really need this gizmo?" By being more selective in what you purchase and choosing quality, durable devices you will reduce what ends up being recycled.

EcoNM: Why should I recycle a computer?

Natural Evolution: For two reasons: Data Security and to preserve our planet's natural resources. We are able to fully erase hard drives and storage media which keeps your personal or business information private, instead of possibly ending up in someone else's hands. Computer Recycling also reduces the need to mine and process more gold, copper, iron, oil and other raw materials that are used in manufacturing computers and electronic devices.

Recycling your old computers and electronics is only one part of the equation. Choose what you buy carefully, selecting durable items that won't need to be replaced quickly. Then maximize the use of your electronics and postpone 'Upgrading' as long as you can. Then when a device is truly at the end of its useful life, recycle it. Being electronically frugal will save you money in the short term and is easier on the planet in the long term.