

How to throw away an old business computer safely

🕒 READ TIME: 2 MINS

👥 AUDIENCE: BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

Before you even think about taking a hammer to the hard drive or taking it to your local recycling point, there are some steps you should take to ensure that you not only protect the environment when disposing of an old computer, but also yourself.

PREPERATION

Firstly, you need to consult your employer about the organisation's data disposal policies. This should give you insight into how you are to manage business related information on your computer. It's extremely important to do this, as the law requires businesses to follow data security and disposal requirements when it relates to your customers or client's details.

Once you have familiarised yourself with your organisation's data disposal policies, now you can start to back up any important files. This includes any documentation with personal information about you, or a client as well as any documents and spreadsheets. The easiest and quickest way to do this is to use file syncing software such One Drive or Google's Cloud. This is a good way to make sure that you can access all files

from any new computer/laptop or even smart phone and ensures that you won't suddenly lose them in the future. Or you can invest in an external hard drive to keep your files safe.

Sometimes removing files and deleting them is not always the most secure way to keep yourself safe, you can access specialist software designed to meet government approved standards for secure deletion such as Eraser.

Next, you need to protect yourself from your browsers. The majority of internet browsers save information from your browsing history, such as your user names and passwords for various sites. Make sure to clear all your internet browser history by finding the option in the browser's settings menu.

Uninstall your programs such as Microsoft

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Office, often programs like this can contain personal information. Uninstalling them gives you added protection from anyone who may go on to use your computer in the future.

To finish, it is worth doing a factory reset or turning on drive encryption for extra protection. Now your computer will be ready to recycle or rehome.

RECYCLING YOUR COMPUTER

Choosing to recycle your old computer is a great choice, but you need to make sure that you are giving it to a responsible recycler who is equipped to handle all types of waste.



Computers can contain hazardous and sometimes valuable metals. Make sure to use a recycler that takes 'display equipment, general WEEE' as specified by the European commission's waste electrical and electronic equipment regulations.

REHOMING YOUR COMPUTER

If you wish to sell to your computer instead, you will need to search for the exact model and get a rough estimate of how much it is worth. For some makes, such as Apple, you can return your computer and in exchange you will receive some money off your next apple purchase.



FIND OUT MORE

The Lancashire Cyber Foundry runs a series of business strategy and cyber workshops specifically designed for SMEs in Lancashire. We're passionate about seeing Lancashire business become more cyber-aware and innovative and so offer funded places for companies to come and learn how to defend, innovate and grow their business. Additionally, we have an experienced technical team ready to help you with your business innovation ideas, particularly around cyber and digital innovation.

To find out more about how your business can access support or register on one of upcoming workshops, contact us: cyberfoundry@lancaster.ac.uk