

Going Green Puts E-Cyclers in the Black

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The world's seemingly insatiable appetite for electronics is shaping up to be a major environmental problem. As the life span of consumer electronics and computers is shortened by each new generation of technology, they are discarded and often end up in landfills, fields and rivers.

As government agencies and environmental activists lament the waste these unwanted technologies create, a burgeoning industry is developing around refurbishing or recycling all manner of unwanted electronics.

Some companies in this field grind up old electronics and harvest them for raw materials like aluminum, copper and gold; others specialize in wiping data from old computers and re-selling them.



e-Cycling

Ed Stukane sees the value in recycling electronics, but his mission is ensuring as many as possible are re-used. Stukane is the chief marketing officer of PlanITROI, a Denville, N.J.-based firm that buys companies' unwanted information technology equipment.

If the equipment is still usable, PlanITROI wipes its data, refurbishes it and sells it to an online electronics retailer.

If the equipment is too old to refurbish, the company moves it to an electronics recycler.

One of the key services PlanITROI provides, Stukane said, is helping companies determine how much their IT equipment is worth and how much value it will lose in a given amount of time. (The company's name refers to its ability to help a company "plan" the return on investment of its IT equipment.)

Companies like PlanITROI help firms profit from their discarded IT equipment while minimizing the waste they create.

"[Our clients] think to themselves, 'We are a responsible, global corporation. We don't want our equipment ending up in a field in Africa or a river in China,'" Stukane said.