

COMPUTER

NEWS AND NOTES

The Hidden Dangers Of Computer Disposal

(NAPSA)—To millions of computer users worldwide, an outdated or malfunctioning computer is no different than a broken toaster; they simply toss it in the trash and buy a new one. However, unlike a busted kitchen appliance, a computer should not be thrown away for two critical reasons: it can lead to identity theft and poison the environment.

Protect The Environment

Some pieces of hardware may contain toxic materials. Much like used motor oil or old paint, certain computer parts must not be disposed of in a public landfill in order to prevent toxic substances from leaching into the ground and contaminating water supplies. These components should be disposed of properly by trained professionals who participate in computer recycling.

Protect Your Identity

The hard drive inside your computer contains an extensive amount of private information, such as financial records, personal e-mails, family photos and critical documents. To prevent this data from falling into the wrong hands—which could lead to identity theft—it is imperative that you delete it prior to selling, recycling or disposing of your computer.

To erase files in a safe, permanent manner, you must do more than delete them and empty the Windows “recycle bin.” While these actions may remove the information from Windows, they do not expunge the files from the hard drive itself. The only ways to ensure that your private files are permanently erased are to use special “shredder” software programs.

A word of caution: if your hard



Discarding your old computer can put your personal information and data at risk.

drive is on the fritz or appears to be “dead,” don’t assume that your data is incapable of being retrieved. A crafty thief could rummage through your trash, steal the malfunctioning hard drive you threw out, then use special hardware or software tools to recover your data. Before throwing away any hard drive that appears to be inaccessible or severely damaged, make certain the drive is truly dead by physically smashing it several times with a hammer or similar tool.

Geeks On Call offers a variety of on-site support services, including troubleshooting, maintenance, upgrades, networking and training/consulting for computer users at their homes or businesses. When virus and spyware issues surface or other computer headaches arise, the company’s certified technicians deliver prompt, expert PC service on-site, including information on safely erasing data.

To learn more, call 1-800-905-GEEK or visit www.geeksoncall.com.