

Consumer Electronics

Why we care

The average American household contains 24 electronic products, and we are replacing them all the time. Why? Planned obsolescence and our desire for the latest features are partly to blame. We keep computers only about 3 ½ years, and about 40 percent of us replaced our cell phone last year. All of this has a big environmental impact. Manufacturing one computer and monitor takes 530 pounds of fossil fuels, 48 pounds of chemicals, and 1.5 tons of water. Disposal is also a problem. E-waste is the fastest growing component of municipal waste in the US and is responsible for about 70% of the toxic waste in landfills. A new Oregon law makes it illegal to dispose of TVs, computers, or monitors in landfills.

Simple, positive change

- Purchase Energy Star models. Energy Star computers use 70% less electricity.
- Consider type and size. A plasma TV uses 2-3 times as much energy as an LCD. A 52-inch LCD uses twice as much power as a 32-inch LCD.
- Turn off your monitor if you're away for 15 minutes or more and your computer if it will be idle at least two hours.
- For old equipment, consider donating for reuse before recycling because that saves more resources and creates more jobs. Call 503-234-3000.
- If not donating your phone, assure valuable metals are retrieved. GreenPhone.com will pay for your phone.
- Recycle computers, monitors and TVs at Oregon E-Cycles collection sites. See www.deq.state.or.us/lq/ecycle/index.htm.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.