

Innovations



Earth Day is for Everyone!

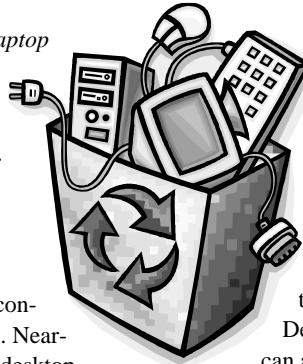
Earth Day was created to bring people together to fight for the environment. The Earth Day Network (EDN), was founded on the premise that all people regardless of race, gender, income, or geography have a right to a healthy and sustainable environment. Their mission is to broaden and diversify the environmental movement around the world.

The Earth Day Network's programs and activities support groundbreaking environmental educational programs that help better the environment through volunteer and awareness campaigns, and inspire people around the world to take action.

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Dispose of unwanted devices safely. Don't recycle company data or your identity with your e-waste!

If you have recently invested in a new laptop or tower computer, you may be looking for a way to offload your old one. Be sure to clean off your personal information or you may be handing out your company or personal information to thieves.



Startling facts about e-waste.

Consumer Reports reveals that 3 in 10 consumers replaced their computer in 2007. Nearly 2 in 10 consumers that disposed of a desktop computer or monitor threw them in the trash. According to the New York Times, approximately 1.8 million tons of discarded computers, printers, cell phones and other electronics wound up in landfills in 2007. That is a lot of e-waste!

So, if you have unwanted electronics or e-waste, please consider donating it to a good cause, selling it to someone who can reuse it, or recycle your e-waste.

Donate, sell or recycle your old computer, but keep your data and identity safe.

Deleting files and information just isn't enough these days. Your computer holds on to deleted data so it can be recovered if necessary. So, how can you be sure your information is properly removed from your com-

puter before you get rid of it? Use a program that is designed to overwrite the hard drive on your computer to wipe it clean.

Removing the files yourself using disk-cleaning software is not too difficult. Many free cleaning utilities are available to download online for free such as Active Kill Disk, Disk Cleaner, or even Sure Delete. If this is just too much work, you can always send your used computer or other devices to a refurbishing company that will wipe the devices clean and donate them to a worthy cause for you.

Beware... printers can also hold critical data that criminals love! Did you know that many printers save data on a hard drive, and that data can be reused when plugged into a computer? Unfortunately, it doesn't matter if the printer even works. The hard drive may be unharmed and useful in the hands of a criminal. Just like a computer, your printer can be used for identity theft. There are software programs that can overwrite the data if you feel strongly about donating or selling your printer. However, de-

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Protect yourself! 4 easy Wi-Fi connection safety tips

Did you know that a Wi-Fi connection uses a radio link to connect to the Internet or other computers and the connection is not guaranteed to be secure?

What it boils down to is luck. If you are lucky, the Wi-Fi connection you find in a hotel or airport will be safe. If you are lucky, no hackers will be sitting around waiting for easy prey to pop on the Wi-Fi connection you found. Are you willing to risk the

safety of your company and the data on your computer just to check in online while you are on the go?

Don't compromise the security of your data for FREE Internet! It is all too easy to find a wireless hotspot these days. Coffee shops and restaurants even post signs in their front windows to advertise FREE Internet connections. Follow these 4 Wi-Fi safety tips and protect yourself against clever thieves.

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Dispose of your devices safely...

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 stroying the hard drive is the only 100% guaranteed way of keeping your data safe.

Prepare your cell phone before handing it off... If you are selling, donating or recycling your cell phone, don't forget to delete your personal and company data first. A cellular device is much like a printer it holds traces of the information so it can be restored if necessary even if the phone is broken.

If you are planning to upgrade to a new phone or just have an old one taking up space in your desk drawer, see your cell phone manual or wireless provider's website for details regarding permanent information deletion. Don't forget to remove your SIM and memory cards too before donating a cellular device.

Ready to donate? Determine if your device can be reused. A good rule of thumb to follow is, if you have a computer or device that is less than five years old it can usually be repurposed. The chances are very good that a non-profit or charitable agency could reuse your unwanted electronics to train individuals who are new users or even use your device within the organization.

Tips for donating unwanted electronics to a good cause. Donating your devices to a local charity or a community group can have a great impact on others. Be sure to call the group you have in mind first to be sure they have a need for the equipment you intend to donate.

If you cannot find a local organization, try searching for an agency that fits your interests online. Remember to check the agency's policy regarding data on the devices to ensure proper handling of your critical information. Here are a few safe non-profit organizations to consider:

✦ www.cristina.org
 Accepts computer donations to reuse the technology to support training and greater independence for disabled individuals and other people in need.

✦ www.pcforschools.org
 A non-profit organization that refurbishes donated Pentium PC's and late

model Macintoshes, then distributes them to needy schools.

✦ www.worldcomputerexchange.org
 A global education and environmental non-profit that helps connect youth in 67 developing countries to the skills, opportunities, and understanding of the Internet while keeping working computers out of landfills.

Selling unwanted electronics can be a win-win tool! Not only can you clear out devices that have been cluttering your home or workspace, but you can make a few bucks in the process. A great way to sell unwanted electronics is to include them in a garage sale or post them on your favorite classifieds website like Craigslist.org or ClassifiedAds.com.

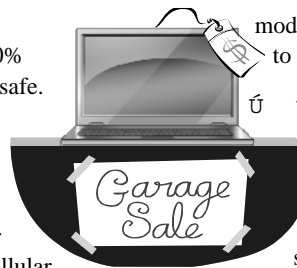
If you have a little extra money to invest, look into upgrading your device before putting it up for sale. You may be pleasantly surprised at how quickly your devices will sell with current software or programs and how much more you can earn with such a minimal investment.

Recycling locations in your area are easy to find! Now you can find e-waste recycling locations quickly with Earth911.com. This website holds information for over 117,000 locations and programs for more than 240 materials, and that is just the beginning of their service. Earth911 is also geared toward education, teaching visitors *why* they should recycle, on top of *how* and *where*. If you're short on time, call for information and locations near you:

Earth911 • 1-800-CLEANUP

Or visit Earth911.com and download their FREE **iRecycle** application for your iPhone and start recycling today!

Recycling improves the health of our planet. So, let's work together to keep our planet green! It is up to us to reduce the amount of waste piling up in our landfills. Take a look at the Recycling 101 section on Earth 911.com today to learn more. You will be amazed at how many items can



3 things you can do to conserve energy today!

Are you concerned about your environmental impact on our planet? Take a moment to implement these three changes to conserve energy in your office today.

1. Set your computers power management settings on your computer. According to www.ClimateSaversComputing.org, using the power management features on your computer can save nearly half a ton of CO₂ and more than \$60 annually on energy costs. This is as simple as setting your computer to automatically go to "sleep" when it is not in use.

2. Order and use a smart power strip. The ultimate way to avoid idle electronics from drawing unnecessary standby electricity is to unplug them. However, many of us don't have time to

run around the office everyday and unplug everything that is not in use. This is where a smart strip can help. While there are many designs available for roughly \$40-\$50, you can purchase a smart strip that prevents your equipment from drawing idle current when it is not in use and even turn off your devices based on a programmable schedule you set.

3. Choose an Energy Star compliant computer the next time you buy. Energy Star computers use 20-50% less energy, depending on how they are used of course. The Energy Star program proudly reports, the savings in energy costs could grow to more than \$2 billion each year and greenhouse gas emissions could be reduced by the equivalent of emissions from nearly 3 million vehicles if all computers sold in the U.S. met the stringent Energy Star requirements. What a great impact!

Protect yourself! 4 easy Wi-Fi safety tips...

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1. Disable your wireless card's ad-hoc (peer-to-peer) mode now! If you don't know what an ad-hoc connection is, you probably don't use it. Ad-hoc sometimes called computer-to-computer networking, allows two computers to be linked together. This type of connection may be used during a meeting to share documents or an Internet connection. Turning off this feature on your laptop will prevent hackers from connecting directly to your computer to steal data.

2. Assume you are being monitored by hackers on all free Wi-Fi connections. You can never really be sure if your connection is encrypted or secure when you do not have control over the connection. Turn on your firewall to protect yourself from computer-savvy hackers just waiting to break into your computer, browse your unprotected files or watch your online activity.

3. Don't connect to your work computer without a Virtual Private Network (VPN). On an unencrypted connection, hackers can easily follow your actions and even hitch a ride with you right into your company's system if you do not use a VPN. The worst part, businesses usually don't know that their networks have been breached until it is too late. A VPN allows you to access your internal network or computer at the office using the

Internet but through an encrypted tunnel so you don't have to rely on the hotspot's security to keep you safe.

What if you need to process a few payments online? While many companies, banks, and online shopping establishments now enforce stringent security policies, be aware that your email providers relaxed regulations could be dangerous. Even emailed financial information on a free Wi-Fi connection can be intercepted. Unfortunately, this kind of theft is difficult to track and even harder to prove. So, be careful out there!

4. Turn off your laptop's wireless capabilities when you are not using them, especially when traveling. Most laptops search for Wi-Fi signals automatically and the connection could stay open even when you store your laptop in your shoulder bag to eat a meal at the airport or board a plane. Hackers look for computers that are connected but show no activity so they can dive in and take advantage of the free data buffet. Don't leave your computer open for hackers to stop in for a bite.

A friend in your corner... If you need help preparing your laptop for your next business trip, give us a call. We can help you turn off the ad-hoc connection, turn on your firewall, and determine if your connection to the office is secure. Don't risk your company or personal data on a free Wi-Fi connection while you are away from the office.

Earth Day...

(Continued from page 1)

Did you know... Earth Day, April 22nd, is the largest secular holiday in the world? Today, Earth Day is a global tradition celebrated by more than one billion people in over 170 nations around the world, according to EDN.

Want to get involved? Take a moment to visit the Earth Day Network's website at www.earthday.net to find out how. They have many connections to programs around the world that you can be a part of. Take action today and become a part of the yearlong initiative called the Green Generation, which leads up to the 40th anniversary of Earth Day.

Don't miss the Earth Day Network Footprint Calculator too. You can take a quick quiz online to see the impact you are having on the planet and learn how to improve your impression on our earth.



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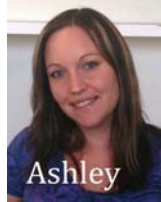
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Ask us about our fixed price service agreements — Computer support at a flat monthly fee you can budget for just like rent!



Get involved today!
www.EarthDay.net

Inquiring Minds...

Great customer service can give you an edge. In a world-wide marketplace, there may be times when it's difficult to compete in the area of labor costs, and in some cases, even material costs. At these times, your customer service skills can put you ahead of the game when competing with companies both at home and abroad. Quality customer service should be a top consideration for every team member.

That means not only listening to customers and providing good service, but identifying unmet needs that can result in new revenue opportunities or even referrals. A successful customer experience often requires collaboration with others in the organization and communication with your own suppliers.

Customers must feel important and appreciated. They are very sensitive to whether we care about them. Be sincere and thank them every time you get a chance. You can't be too kind! Look for ways to say "yes." Comply with any reasonable request and make sure that everything you promise is done. Follow through and follow up to ensure your client sees you care.

Don't be afraid to apologize for something that has gone wrong. If you made a mistake, fess up. Show your customers that you are human, but be sure to tell them what you are going to do to avoid such an issue in the future. Don't just sweep it under the rug or try to buy their loyalty. Customers must always feel that they are appreciated and their business is important to you.

Banking Trojans are on the rise! Cyber criminals have flooded the internet with "Banking Trojans" that attach to and manipulate online accounts. Automated Clearing House (ACH) payments and transfers seem to be the primary target. These common transactions are used by businesses to deposit compensation checks, collect payments for purchases or even

process payments to suppliers. In some cases, wire transfers are used to move larger sums of money for bigger purchases, but even these transactions are now at risk.

Small businesses, governments and school districts are said to be the target. Typically, the organization under fire first receives a "spear phishing" email that contains an infected attachment or website to visit. From there, unsuspecting users are infected with a tiny malware program that includes a keylogger. Once the program is in place, this program creates a log of all keystrokes recording every activity completed on the computer. Unfortunately, these keylogger programs can be hidden so your antivirus software will not detect it running in the background.

The only incontestable way to ensure your business transactions are safe is to dedicate a computer for your financials. The intent is to separate email and web browsing from the financial transactions so you always have an uncompromised terminal to work with.

ARE YOU SEEKING:

Security, Data Protection, and Peace of Mind!



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