

[Jump to Navigation](#) | [Jump to Content](#)

Popular Threads on Solosez

Computer Disposal

What does everyone do with old computers?

I have both a desktop and laptop that I need to dispose of. Both computers work, although the laptop needs a new battery before I can even see what is on it.

I was going to donate them both to Salvation Army but was told that, even if I use "remove programs" to delete everything, you can never completely delete all information from the hard drive.

Is it better to just smash them?

Dondra S. Bass

I take the hard drive out and completely smash it to bits. If you want to donate it after you do that, I think you're safe and the donee can cheaply replace the hard drive and have a functioning computer...

Bernie Dietz

Format the hard drive a couple of times, and use if you can swing it use a professional removal program that actually writes over the old data a number of times.

Even the U.S. government rarely destroys a computer to keep material secret. That is done only when the hardware 1) has contains classified material, 2) and cannot be recycled within government programs.

Roger Traversa

There are several free utilities for that. I use Eraser, myself:

<http://www.heidi.ie/eraser/>

I know some folks are paranoid, but I would be willing to be a significant sum of money that nobody, not even the CIA, would be able to recover data overwritten with random data seven times per DOD standards. I think smashing the hard drive is way overkill. And wasteful.

Mike Koenecke

You might try re-formatting the hard drive. I'm not a computer tech, but I *think* that will totally get rid of everything.

Cynthia Turcotte

1) For security purposes, you should first wipe your hard drive. This can be done with a free utility called BCWipe. <http://www.jetico.com/index.htm#bcwipepd.htm>. As long as time is not an issue, I would suggest wiping it using the 35 times option. (This could take several days depending on the size of your drive.)

Then remove the hard drive. After it's removed, drill 5 or 10 holes completely through it in various places.

For an added touch, I put mine in a plastic bag filled with dog poop before I threw it away along with my trash.

2) Each county in the State of Maryland has a recycling program for computers. You can call your local Department of Waste Management or Department of Public Works to see if your county has one.

3) Most computer manufacturers have recycling programs as well. For a list of the manufacturers along with links to their recycling information, you can go to <http://www.mde.state.md.us/Programs/LandPrograms/recycling/SpecialProjects/eCycling.asp#commercial>.



Subscribe to Solosez

First Name

Last Name

E-mail Address

Submit (input element)



Unsubscribe from Solosez

E-mail Address

Submit (input element)



Books

Click on the book for more info



Terry A. Berger

Thanks to everyone for your responses! They were extremely helpful.

Dondra S. Bass

Ease E Waste, in SoCal, routinely has recycling days to pick up old electronics. Lots of money in that!

daniel x. nguyen

My brother sent me a link on how to erase your hard drive before you give it away. I have not tested it, so I don't know how well it works.

<http://blogs.zdnet.com/storage/?p=129&tag=nl.e622>

Chris Bumgarner

You might find this article written by South Carolina Bar Practice Management Advisor Courtney Kennaday and myself useful:

<http://www.wisbar.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Search&template=/cm/htmldisplay.cfm&contentid=46822>

I've changed my opinion about removing data from hard drives. My recommendation to my clients now is to pull the drives and simply keep them forever - secure erasure still being a generally good idea as well. If you intend to donate the machines, it is cheaper to find a new 80 Gb hard drive for a desktop PC (as little as \$30 with smart shopping) and provide that, along with the PC itself and the original Windows CD - it's cheaper than the time involved in secure erasure itself and readying a PC for donation.

Ross Kodner

Use something like Blanco PC Data Cleaner to over write your hard drive:

<http://rethink.ebay.com/odcs/custom.htm?template=pcdatatools>

Ebay Rethink is a good site for info on your various options, including recycling and donating:

<http://rethink.ebay.com/>

Neal Fortin

I use Darik's Boot and Nuke (DBAN) when I need to securely erase a hard disk. It is free, open source software that will overwrite your hard disk multiple times to make data recovery impractical (but not impossible with enough time and money).

<<http://dban.sourceforge.net/>>

David S. Markowitz

Reformatting a drive will not keep the data from a computer forensics examiner. Trust me on that one.

I was on vacation last week and just caught up, but Roger's recommendation of DBAN is right on. That's what we tell folks to use too. Effective and you can't beat free.

Sharon D. Nelson

[Back to Popular Threads](#)

[Back to Top](#)