

# Let Your Old technology Stimulate The Local Economy

By: Terri Bennett

*I'm* going to bet that nearly every one of you reading this has at least one computer and monitor or a box of computer parts sitting in a closet somewhere in your home. You're sure you'll find a use for it all someday, but the stuff has been sitting there for years gathering dust.

Stop the wishful thinking and admit that you are never going to use it again and then donate it all to Goodwill. Through a partnership with Dell called "Reconnect," participating Goodwill donation centers will accept any brand of used computer equipment. The equipment will be recycled and money generated in the process will be used to create job opportunities for individuals with disabilities and others having difficulty finding work.

Didn't know that Goodwill recycles computers? Most people don't. Of course, you'll want to wipe the hard drive clean first to protect your identity and there are a number of online programs that can do the job for free. Search for "permanent

eraser" at [apple.com](http://apple.com) if you own a MAC, or try [eraser.heidi.ie](http://eraser.heidi.ie) if you have a PC.


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After donating your computer, Goodwill will wipe the drive clean again, make sure the computer is in working order, and then sell it in one of its retail centers. I recently visited a Goodwill Computer Works store and found perfectly good used or refurbished computers along with a remarkable selection of computer accessories, both new and used. It's no wonder it's the favorite new spot for computer techies in town!

Some donated computers can't be recycled but that's no problem for Goodwill. A spike is drilled through the hard drive for additional protection and sold along with other parts to recyclers. Dell keeps tabs on those recycling companies to ensure that the materials are handled responsibly. To date, Reconnect has recycled more than

50 million pounds of used computer equipment and the program continues to expand.

Donating your equipment to Goodwill is a great alternative to sending that old computer, keyboard, printer, mouse, and monitor to the landfill. Electronic waste is the fastest growing sector of trash in this country and it's extremely dangerous stuff. E-waste contains hazardous metals such as lead and mercury. Many of those hazards can be recycled and kept from ever getting into our land, air, and water.

So do your part and donate your used computer equipment to Goodwill. You'll be lightening your load, putting someone to work, keeping harmful materials out of the environment, and getting a tax deduction all at once! The Reconnect program is available in this area. For a list of participating Goodwill locations, visit [www.reconnectpartnership.com](http://www.reconnectpartnership.com). 

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