

# QuickTips



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Your Technology Team

## **New Life for Old Computers: Refurbish, Recycle, or Donate**

It's almost Tax Day – and for a lot of us, that means we're still looking for ways to take a little bit more off our tax bill. If you're also looking to replace outdated computer equipment, it's also the perfect time to invest in a new computer and donate the old one to some worthy cause for some possible tax benefits. But before you get too far, there are a few things you should know about donating old computers.

There are plenty of other reasons for doing more with your old computer than just dumping it in the trash. If you go through the proper channels – namely, the relevant computer manufacturer, a charity, or a refurbisher – you can be more confident that any information you inadvertently leave on that old computer doesn't end up in the wrong hands. You can also do some good for the environment while you're at it!

Old computers are full of toxic and hazardous materials that make sticking it in the trash bin a no-no. If you've got a computer that's over 5 years old, contact a recycler or the computer manufacturer; most major manufacturers (including Apple, Dell, Gateway, Hewlett Packard, and IBM/Lenovo) now have their own recycling programs. Recyclers and manufacturers know how to dismantle your computer to separate out reusable materials and properly dispose of the hazardous ones.

If your computer is under 5 years of age and still in good working condition, consider donating it to a refurbishing service or a charity. Refurbishers know how to wipe hard drives to ensure your information doesn't live on in your donated computer's next incarnation. And they'll make sure your machine is in tip-top shape before they pass it along to a charity.

You can also donate directly to many charities, but they may not have a lot of deep computing knowledge. For that reason, giving them an older computer may actually cost them a lot more time, energy, and hassle than they need making sure licenses and software are up to date and compliant with various regulations.

Before you give away or recycle your computer, remove all the data from your hard drive and any removable media such as disks, PC cards, flash drives and CD-ROMs. Not sure whether to recycle or donate? Contact CMIT Solutions and we'll give you our expert advice.

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