

**WE SURRENDER:** More Bay State residents are throwing in the bankruptcy towel. **3**

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# The cost of not recycling office equipment properly

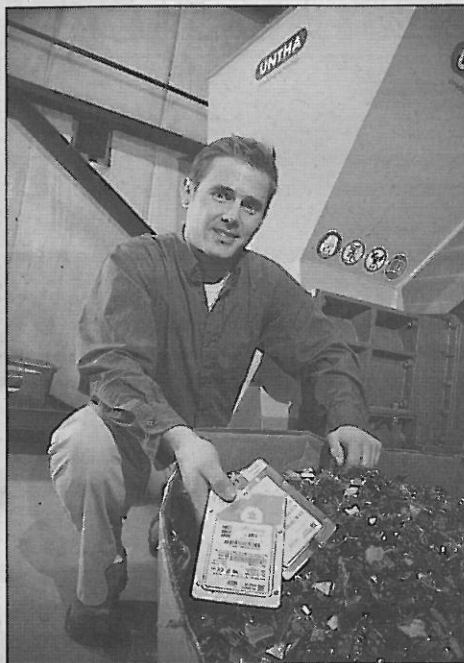
BY KEITH REGAN  
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

There are plenty of reasons a business would take steps to ensure its old office equipment is properly recycled. Even though a business has outgrown a copier or computer, it may still be of use to others. Proper recycling can also help a company lighten its environmental impact.

The most powerful motivation of all, however, may be the consequences of not recycling equipment properly. Computer monitors in particular contain elements such as lead that have specific disposal regulations enforced by the **Environmental Protection Agency**. Illegally dumping such components can lead to fines that can far outweigh the costs of proper disposal.

These days, businesses have a host of options for recycling their no-longer-useful equipment, from programs that reclaim older equipment to professional recycling programs that take care of the potentially dangerous components. Such programs can also reclaim nuggets of value — computers and servers often contain small amounts of gold — and guarantee that hard drives containing data are destroyed in the process.

“Most businesses will develop a plan for recycling their older equipment as they go through the refreshing process,” said **Matt Decareau**, director of business development at **M&K Recovery**



W. MARC BERNSAU | BUSINESS JOURNAL

**Matt Decareau, director of business development at M&K Recovery Group, says there's greater awareness these days on the proper way to dispose of office equipment.**

**Group Inc.** in North Andover, a 20-year-old firm that specializes in electronics recycling. “It’s definitely something that there is much higher awareness of now than just a few years ago.”

Many businesses will use third-party logistics firms to help keep e-waste from falling into the wrong hands, especially when closing an office or during major upgrades.

## WASTE NOT

**These days, companies** are more apt to development plans to recycle their older office equipment.

**Third-party logistics firms** can help with your recycling needs, making sure e-waste does not fall into the wrong hands.

**Donating equipment to** nonprofits or schools can extend the life of office equipment and be more environmentally friendly.

M&K’s facility contains a shredder capable of destroying 500 hard drives an hour. The firm provides a certificate of data destruction and also offers customers the ability to witness the destruction, either in person or via a Web camera. “This day and age all you hear about is identify theft and data leaks, and companies need to be able to feel confident their data isn’t at risk at the end of the life cycle,” Decareau said.

Many office equipment vendors have begun to offer green-focused recycling programs of their own. For instance, **Hewlett-Packard** will buy back certain equipment that can be refurbished, and it will properly recycle older or broken components. **Dell** also offers free recycling on its older equipment.

Likewise, **Toshiba Business Solutions Inc.** has also launched a program aimed at keeping all of its equipment from reaching landfills, according to **Dennis**

**G. Kelley**, vice president of finance for the manufacturer’s New England territory.

Copiers and all-in-one machines in particular are often refreshed before their useful life is up. In such cases, dealers may resell equipment — often shipping it to less-developed markets — or businesses may donate equipment to a nonprofit organization or a school, for example.

“The most environmentally friendly option in my opinion would be the use of the copier in a secondary market or the refurbishing or remanufacturing of the unit, since there is no waste material to be accounted for,” Kelley said.

Many mobile phone companies have launched their own recycling programs for phone handsets. **Verizon Wireless New England** works with individuals as well as corporate customers as part of its HopeLine program, which recycles, refurbishes and resells older phones. It uses the proceeds to supply prepaid phones to women in shelters, such as the Elizabeth Stone House in Jamaica Plain, to offer protection from domestic violence.

“Businesses want to know where their used equipment is going,” said **Michael Murphy**, public relations manager for Verizon Wireless New England. “A business could face a public relations nightmare if devices that can be traced back to them end up in the wrong hands.”