

IAITAM: STILL TIME FOR “SPRING CLEANING” OF COMPUTERS AND DRIVES ... BUT INDIVIDUALS, SMALL BUSINESSES SHOULD BEWARE OF PITFALLS

How Small Business Owners and Individual Consumers Can Protect Themselves with Data Disposal Techniques.

CANTON, OH – June 10, 2019 – If you are eager to get rid of old computers, drives and other hardware this spring, you are not alone. The digital age makes it increasingly easier to store and transfer information using hard drives or flash drives. A virtual data thumbprint exists on all devices that we touch. While these tools are convenient there are inherent security dangers lurking within. Individuals and small businesses (including work-at-home consultants and sole proprietors) should make certain they use sound information technology asset disposal (ITAD) processes, according to the International Association of IT Asset Managers (IAITAM).

Technology and electronics hold a high risk of security threats if not handled with care. These dangers are often overlooked as consumers search for the latest digital tools. And the temptation is strong to help pay for new devices by selling the old.

Dr. Barbara Rembiesa, IAITAM president and CEO: **“When it comes to computers, drives and other hardware, it’s not as simple as ‘out with the old and with the new.’ Consumers and small business operators need to be in the business of protecting themselves from major security liabilities that come with disposing of old electronics. Proper ITAD principles exist to protect individual data no matter how big or small the user.”**

How big are the risks for consumers and small businesses?

In recent news [eBay and Craigslist sellers have been under scrutiny](#) again for selling used electronics with private information still intact, accessible through data recovery software. An international [study completed by Blancco Technology Group and Ontrack](#) found that half of the electronics examined still had residual data, of which 15 percent was personally identifiable. The private files recovered included: passport photos, copies of birth certificates, financial records, school documents (with names and grades of students) and resumes/CVs. Almost all the sellers maintained they had used proper disposal methods before listing. Reformatting was the primary mode of disposal, yet even this technique was not enough for permanent or secure data removal.

Additional work-related was found, such as: archived internal emails, shipping schedules, new hire documents and office files. This presents an additional concern for businesses- any individual can become a liability to the company they work for through faulty disposal of data on private devices.

Top considerations for individuals and small businesses when disposing of used electronics:

- **Develop an “asset disposal mind”** – Learn to see consumer data as an asset that should be protected. Become educated on [IT asset management](#) through IAITAM. Once knowledgeable on the topic, begin assessing risk factors on current devices. How can the data stored on them become more secure?
- **Use certified data drive sanitation and destruction methods** – Practice secure methods of data sanitization only. Take extra precautions when deleting information and make sure that important information is backed up in safe places. Learn more about ITAD best methods [here](#).
- **Employ trusted technology tools** – Investing in data erasure software is the easiest solution for DIY data disposal. Confirm the data was erased with a verified certificate. For extra security, double check the data was erased with data recovery software. A variety of options exist for these purposes and is often worth the extra investment.

- **Choose the correct vendor** – Carefully select the companies used for destruction of data or selling of electronics. Do research on the company ahead of time to make sure they have not had any complaints. Ask for physical proof that the data was erased, or only choose vendors that offer this guarantee.
- **Insist on secure drop-off points and delivery of equipment** – Be certain that the devices go straight to the next destination. Select a vendor or seller that has safety protocols in place for picking up or receiving used electronics.
- **Wipe the device yourself, instead of relying on the seller to do it for you** – Extra precautions and safeguards when disposing of old devices ensure higher percentage of success in removing all data. A device that is wiped by both the original owner and reseller is more likely to be free of rogue data.
- **Sell to coworkers, friends, family or trusted buyers** – Instead of selling used electronics to strangers, consider ways to make use of those older devices within current social networks.
- **Opt out of reselling and/or buying used devices** – Just say no. If extremely sensitive personal information was stored on the device, there is the option of physically destroying or shredding the drive. Highly reputable companies exist to handle these exact kinds of challenges. Choose an electronic recycling company that has certifications. Be certain that the company selected safely disposes of data and engages in environmentally friendly recycling practices.
- **When in doubt enlist the help of a certified data destruction specialist or IT Asset Manager.**

Dr. Rembiesa said: **“Risk mitigation begins with an emphasis on proper storage methods and data disposal techniques. The role of IT Asset Managers within an organization is to handle these kinds of technological threats. The average consumer is currently in a unique position, where navigating complicated security issues is vital to the protection of personal data. Entrepreneurs and individuals that work-from-home are at an even greater risk. The same IT practices that occur within larger organizations can and should happen at all levels of enterprise.”**

ABOUT IAITAM

The International Association of Information Technology Asset Managers, Inc., is the professional association for individuals and organizations involved in any aspect of IT Asset Management, Software Asset Management (SAM), Hardware Asset Management, Mobile Asset Management, IT Asset Disposition and the lifecycle processes supporting IT Asset Management in organizations and industry across the globe. IAITAM certifications are the only IT Asset Management certifications that are recognized worldwide. For more information, visit www.iaitam.org, or the IAITAM mobile app on Google Play or the iTunes App Store.

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