

The Scrap Recycling Industry: **Electronic Scrap**

The U.S. electronics recycling industry has shown tremendous growth over the past 10 years. This maturing segment of the scrap recycling industry provides a boost of approximately \$5 billion to the U.S. economy (up from less than \$1 billion in 2002) and employs more than 30,000 full time employees (up from 6,000 in 2002).

Last year, the U.S. electronics recycling industry processed 3 million to 4 million tons of used and end-of-life electronics equipment. More than 70 percent of the collected equipment is manufactured into specification grade commodities — including scrap steel, aluminum, copper, lead, circuit boards, plastics and glass. These valuable commodities are then sold to basic materials manufacturers in the United States and globally as raw material feedstock for new products, such as steel, copper, aluminum, plastic and glass.

Electronics recyclers repair, refurbish and resell functioning electronics equipment as used products into domestic and international markets. Companies also provide a number of logistical services, like collection, storage and transportation as well as scrubbing hard drives of sensitive personal and commercial data.

The industry is driven by equipment collected from businesses and commercial interests, comprising up to 75% of the market on a volume basis. The electronics recycling industry is poised to meet the anticipated increased demand for more used products and specification grade commodities, with companies currently operating at about 50% of their operational capabilities.

The electronics recycling industry has seen a dramatic increase in the use of third-party certifications. The marketplace is pushing electronics recyclers to become certified to programs like ISRI's R2/RIOS® program (www.CertifiedElectronicsRecycler.com) to improve operational controls, meet customer demands and secure a competitive advantage.

The reuse of used electronics equipment and consumption of commodity grade materials recovered from electronics to manufacture new products boosts the U.S. economy, creates jobs and sustains the earth's natural resources, conserves impressive amounts of energy in the manufacturing process and reduces greenhouse gas emissions from those facilities.



Approximately
**three million to
four million tons of
electronic equipment
is recycled every year.**



Institute of
Scrap Recycling
Industries, Inc.

Voice of the Recycling Industry



THE ELECTRONIC SCRAP INDUSTRY

Scrap is not waste. Recycling is not disposal. Obsolete electronics are products that contain marketable scrap commodities traded in the global market.

Responsible manufacturing begins with Design for Recycling®, and results in better solutions to the environmental challenges faced at each stage of a product's life.

One metric ton of electronic scrap from personal computers contains more gold than that recovered from 17 tons of gold ore.

Scrap commodity markets are best governed by traditional laws of supply and demand.

Financing mechanisms should only be used to stimulate the recycling of scrap electronics until the markets for those materials are economically viable.

A portion of any fees generated should be spent to develop end-use consumer markets for electronic commodities, such as plastics and glass.

Obsolete recyclable electronics that can be safely and economically recycled should be banned from disposal.

Sources: ISRI's Electronics Recycling Policy & USGS.

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