



IRN

THE RECYCLING NETWORK

IRN Recycles 1.75 Million Pounds of Computers in 2008

With over 90 organizations participating, IRN recycled nearly 1.8 million pounds of computers, monitors, and other electronics in 2008. That makes the IRN one of, if not the single largest account in computer recycling in New England, and guarantees that we'll continue to get the best prices and service in the market – benefits that flow straight to our members and clients. This is the cooperative model at its best.

Electronics recycling got some unfavorable but overdue attention in 2008, when the U.S. General Accounting Office, Business Week, and 60 Minutes (among others) reported a sting that found over 40 electronics recyclers who were shipping used electronics direct to China, including some very large and “reputable” firms. We've made the point before: know your markets, visit and audit them. Any idiot with a printer can type up a “Recycling Certificate.” Don't be the idiot who believes everything he reads.

We are very proud of IRN's own environmental practices and track record. All electronics managed by IRN are processed in facilities that we have toured and audited, and we invite anyone who recycles through IRN to do the same. IRN electronics are hand dismantled or shredded locally, providing jobs for dozens of workers. All commodities are sold into established markets subject to monitoring and audit for environmental compliance.

IRN offers very flexible electronics recycling options. For the 90+ organizations that recycle electronics through IRN, we offer almost as many different service options. We have members who use soft-sided wheeled hampers that are picked up on a regular schedule. Others who palletize, shrink wrap, and then call for service through IRN's web site. Some who put their used electronics in galvord boxes for collection on a scheduled milk run.

Some IRN members have loading docks, and we wheel their electronics directly into an IRN truck. Elsewhere we provide lift gate vans. At several locations, we spot a 24-foot pup trailer, which is filled over a period of weeks or months; when the trailer is full, we pull it out and leave an empty; some combine electronics with other materials, making this a OneStop trailer. A couple of members, out of necessity, hold electronics in a jumble of storage rooms; we provide the crews to package and live load on the fly.

For many organizations, electronics are a core OneStop commodity. OneStop lets an organization recycle electronics along with paper, surplus property, universal wastes, and other commodities at the same time, on the same truck, with regularly scheduled pickup or on-call service. OneStop also generates a single invoice, and consolidated recordkeeping and reporting, for a half dozen or more materials.

We have also handled some very weird calls for service. One IRN institution had been holding onto used computers (along with other electronics, furniture, medical equipment, and miscellaneous junk) for about 40 years. In a massive cleanout, we turned an estimated \$10,000 disposal bill for the electronics alone into a revenue-neutral transaction, taking advantage of precious metal values in much of the older equipment. Another institution scheduled an electronics “amnesty” to get at equipment that was hidden away in closets and under desks (which they perceived, rightly, as a large potential liability). The result: 40 tons of electronics were turned in over the two-week amnesty period – or a pup trailer every couple of days.

Please feel free to call if you'd like audit information on IRN's electronics recycling program, or if you'd like the opportunity to tour a facility to see what happens to your own used electronics when they're recycled through IRN.

Comprehensive Recycling Solutions

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