

WEEE Directive: The rush to recycle – the fear of sensitive data being retained on IT equipment is not a barrier to being green if DoD 5220.22-M standard used

Submitted by: Maxitech.co.uk

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A recent report published on the BBC website indicated that less than 25% of old computers sold or given away by companies have had data removed from them securely.

The fear that IT equipment may retain sensitive data is an issue which could potentially discourage companies from recycling their equipment in an environmentally and socially responsible way, such as donating end of life PCs to charities or schools.

Maxitech.co.uk, the IT recycling company, recently conducted a survey of 400 public and private sector organisations which confirmed that, in more than 90% of cases, sensitive data was only held on servers and not on workstations. On average, organizations had 20 workstations to one server.

However, companies need to identify which machines contain sensitive data and ensure that the data is rendered unrecoverable. Peter Paduh, Managing Director of Maxitech.co.uk says:

“This is in fact easier than it sounds. Any responsible IT recycling company will provide this service to their clients and remove data, to the required standard, from machines that require secure data removal. There are also several inexpensive software tools that IT Managers can use to do this before sending their machines for donation, re-sale or recycling.”

Maxitech.co.uk was recently asked to present on the subject of "Secure Data Removal to enable Re-use of IT Equipment" to the Environmental Best Practices Group, hosted at the London Stock Exchange and organized by the Corporation of London.

Peter Paduh said at the event "Our research and test trading has shown that fear of sensitive information stored on old PCs being used maliciously is one of the biggest obstacles preventing environmental disposal and re-use of old IT equipment."

Maxitech.co.uk technicians permanently remove data from hard drives using software tools that comply with governmental defense standards for data removal. This standard is set by the US department of Defense called DoD 5220.22-M and requires that all storable locations on hard drives or other storage devices are overwritten several times with zeros and random characters before verifying that no data is recoverable.

Businesses need to act on this now to ensure their data does not end up in the wrong hands while implementing environmental disposal strategy and capitalize on some of the economic and ethical opportunities presented by the WEEE Directives.

Further information about responsible recycling and the WEEE Directive can be found at www.maxitech.co.uk.

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