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Disposing of Your Computers – What You Need to Know

Technology changes fast and in a few years the hardware that you purchased cannot support the new software that you are buying. You may need more memory, a faster processor or just want the latest and greatest computer (or smartphone or tablet) that you can buy. What do you do with your old equipment?

You can try to find a charitable organization that needs your computer equipment. Your local school may need your equipment. If you can't find any local organization, try an online search to find a donation site that accepts computer equipment. By donating to a nonprofit organization, you may be eligible for a charitable donation on your tax return.

If you decide against donating to a charity or school, many computer manufacturers accept your old computer equipment. They will recycle the parts they can use and discard the balance. You need to check with your equipment's manufacturer.

Many communities have recycling requirements for electronic equipment. Computer and electronic equipment contains toxic materials and heavy metals. These materials, if thrown in the trash, will end up in a landfill or incinerated, potentially creating an unsafe environment. My business is located in Bergen County, which has created a Computer Recycling Depot, where Bergen County businesses and residents drop off all types of computer and electronic equipment such as monitors, Computer Processing Units (CPU's), laptop computers, printers, keyboards, fax machines, hard drives, modems, speakers, power sources and wiring for recycling and reuse. Your county or town may have a similar recycling center.

Before you get rid of your old computer equipment, make sure that you use software that will clean out the private information that you store on your hard drive. Remember, most businesses keep personal information about the owners, employees and customers on their computers. You must erase all of this personal information before you discard your computer equipment. If you don't clean your hard drive, you leave your company and its customers vulnerable to identity theft, fraud and information theft. Before you clean your hard drive, save the important information that you wish to keep on an external drive or by using storage servers in cyberspace.

Don't just throw your old computer equipment away. That's throwing away money and company secrets.

Email Robin Gronsky at Rgronsky@Gronskeylaw.com to find out how she can advise your business to help you save money, avoid lawsuits, and give you peace of mind.