



IN THE EYE OF THE CYBER STORM

BY: Veena Clay PHOTOGRAPHY: Shane Maritch

If you own a smart device of any kind—and it’s likely you do—you’ve probably taken all the necessary precautions to secure your data while your devices are still online. You may even be hip to the fact that today’s super-savvy hackers are rendering simple password protection almost obsolete. The recent string of high-profile cyber attacks may have inspired you to develop a forward-thinking security strategy.

But have you considered securing your data once it’s time to take your electronics off-line and recycle them?

If not, you should. And don’t kid yourself that a do-it-yourself data wipe prior to recycling will keep your private information out of the hands of code-breaking ne’er-do-wells and information brokers.

The issue of data security is top priority at the nation’s largest electronics recycler, Electronic Recyclers International (ERI). The company’s innovative technologies are leading the way for e-waste management, providing new avenues to address e-waste data security questions.

“There are ways to keep data secure both on and offline,” explains John Shegerian, co-founder and CEO of ERI, currently the only national recycler offering guaranteed secure and verifiable data destruction. “Understandably, this is an issue of chief concern. No one wants their private info falling into the wrong hands.”

LEARNING TOUGH E-WASTE DATA SECURITY LESSONS

A few companies and organizations have learned the pressing need for security measures the hard way. For example, Sony’s latest exploits, which will likely go down in history as the result of a widely publicized, nation-against-nation (well,

almost) hack job, may actually have been the result of a lack of foresight concerning its data security. Reports suggest Sony failed to monitor at least one of its firewalls and failed to control more than 100 of its computer devices during turnovers prior to the December 2014 hacking.

Others, too, are feeling the bite of serious data breaches and learning hard lessons from costly cyber security mistakes—some involving e-waste misappropriation. In fact, 43 percent of companies reported data security breaches in 2014. These included big names such as Target, eBay, Sony Playstation, Microsoft, Xbox and Linux. Many of these breaches resulted from malware or faulty password systems, but e-waste misappropriation is also a major data security concern.

With e-waste misappropriation, there is a common pattern: A company loses control over or fails to monitor its devices during routine upgrades or other turnovers, leaving crucial data exposed. The danger during times of turnover may not necessarily be hacking. It could be actual theft of devices before data is erased or failure to thoroughly remove data from hard drives, making it that much easier for precious private information to get into the wrong hands or wash up on the shores of the Internet for all to see.

KEEPING ELECTRONICS RECYCLING SECURE

The responsibility for data security often falls squarely on the shoulders of recycling centers. Yet, not all recyclers can be trusted. Illegal dumping and shipping to underdeveloped

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nations has increased in recent years as recyclers wrestle with the temptation to skimp on quality in favor of ramping up recycling quantities. When quality values drop among recyclers, it’s a good indication that data security may be low on its priority list.

A rare few recyclers are making data security a top concern, especially in light of the flurry of data breaches shaping technological history. “Data security is by far one of the most important issues for our company, and we wipe data for anyone, whether it’s a huge Fortune 500 company with a 1000 hard drives to recycle or a single household,” says Shegerian. “The key is to verify that the data has been removed completely before proceeding with the recycling process.”

In fact, one of ERI’s premier services does just that. Prior to its recycling process, each electronic device entering the company’s facilities is completely cleared of any data content contained on hard drives and other storage devices. If customers prefer, they can watch the entire data security



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process as it unfolds. Each data swipe at ERI facilities can be videotaped and recorded, so clients receive peace of mind about the privacy and security of their data once it enters the closed recycling loop.

ERI’s video verification service is an innovative offering in the age of data breaches and e-waste misappropriation. It is one of the most reliable ways to ensure end-of-life electronic devices do not end up causing the same pains that working devices cause when data security barriers are breached.

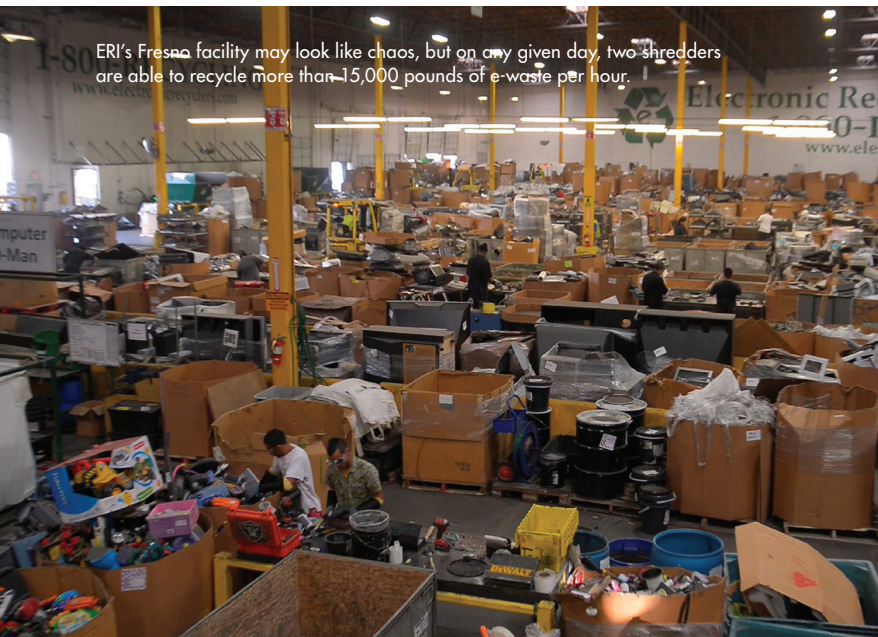
Such guarantees lie at the heart of making electronics recycling more than just an appealing idea. It is a crucial method of dealing with both the global e-waste crisis and massive data security concerns.

“E-waste is already a hotbed issue in America and around the world,” Shegerian says. “In just a few years, with the rate of upgrades and the lightning speed of tech innovations, we’ll be drowning in it. The last thing those who do choose to recycle need is for their data to be compromised in any way. We’re in position to guarantee, with visible evidence, that it isn’t—and to guarantee a certified recycling process that helps sustain our planet.”

electronicrecyclers.com



ERI Co-Founder and CEO, John Shegerian



ERI's Fresno facility may look like chaos, but on any given day, two shredders are able to recycle more than 15,000 pounds of e-waste per hour.



ERI's main shredder at its Fresno, CA, facility can process virtually any material—from plastics to metals.

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