

GARAGE SALES

Reselling Your Electronics

Phones, tablets, MP3 players (remember those?), computers, game consoles and other gadgets are probably boxed up among your goods to donate or sell. Before you let go of these ancient relics of your technological past, you want to make sure all of your information is safely removed from them.

CLEARING AND CLEANING YOUR OLD TECH

The first thing you want to do is do a secure wipe of your electronics before putting them up for sale. Just erasing it isn't enough, Consumer Reports says. Back up the content you want to keep to an external or cloud drive. Then check for removable storage in the DVD drive, card reader and USB ports.

In a mobile phone, look for a removable microSD card. This may be beneath the back battery cover, near the SIM card slot or behind the battery itself. Take both that card



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and the SIM card out as both contain personal data.

On a Mac or PC, do a secure wipe that not only deletes your data but overwrites it a certain number of times to make it more difficult to retrieve. This includes making a free bootable DBAN

CD — a free, open source data-wiping software — or flash drive. Boot your computer with DBAN and choose which level of security you want. You can also type auto-nuke to securely erase all the drives. PC users can also choose from apps like File

Shredder, Eraser and FreeEraser, Consumer Reports says. On mobile devices and tablets, back up your data, then encrypt the device then do a factory reset.

For gaming consoles, do a factory reset after removing

any media cards.

After your data is off the device, clean it following manufacturer's instructions to remove dust or spills. On laptops and computers, break out the air duster to get keyboards, card readers and ports as clean as you can. Clean screens with a cleaner made for the purpose.

SELLING ONLINE

You can always sell in person, though be wary about selling over social media and apps. Always meet people in a public location with other people around. Consider meeting up in the parking lot of a local police station; many public safety buildings have spots specifically designated for this purpose.

Another way to get rid of your electronics (and make money) is to trade them in on buyback sites. PCWorld says these sites will inspect your item, verify it matches your description and then pay you via PayPal, direct deposit, check or gift card. Some buyback services may adjust your valuation after you send the item in with the option to request a new valuation or have your gadgetry returned to you. You can also trade in items with retailers such as Amazon and Best Buy. You may not get as much, but there could also be less hassle than selling in person.

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BUYER'S TIP

Make Sure Used Electronics Work

If you're shopping for electronics, always make sure the item you are looking at buying works as advertised. Ask the seller to let you plug it in and turn it on. Make sure the battery charges and that the programs work as promised. Look for cracks or chips in the screen and make sure included accessories work as well.

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