Dispose of old Windows XP PCs more safely and securely in three easy ways

REDMOND, Wash. – April 7, 2014 – The ways that people use technology for work and in their personal lives has changed significantly during the past decade. With the emergence of tablets and smarter mobile phones, work gets done faster and content gets consumed on-the-go. And as technology evolves, the older machines get left behind.

To keep pace, many studies have concluded that users should replace their PCs every four years to get the maximum value and performance. And with Microsoft Corp. set to end support for Windows XP and Office 2003 on April 8, 2014, it's the perfect time for many to upgrade their devices to more modern technology like Windows 8.1 and Office 365.

But what should people do with old technology once it's been replaced? Unfortunately, it's not as simple as just throwing it away. Discarded electronics such as old computers or outdated mobile phones have a big — and often negative — impact on the environment if not disposed of properly. In fact, according to the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States, recycling 1 million laptops saves the energy equivalent to the electricity used by 3,657 U.S. homes in a year.

That's not all. Improperly disposed-of electronics contain a wealth of information for identity thieves.

"It's important that people consider not only the environmental implications of PC disposal, but also take into account the security implications. Before disposing of a PC or mobile phone, it's important that people take the right steps to make sure all personal and business information has been removed from the device," said Thomas Hansen, vice president of Worldwide Small and Medium Business, Microsoft.

With that in mind, it's clear that — as people buy new devices and move to more modern technologies such as Windows 8.1 and Office 365 — there will be a growing need to help safely and securely dispose of older devices. Microsoft has a few tips:

1. **Find a Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher.** Microsoft Authorized Refurbishers use stringent data-wiping standards to refurbish PCs or servers and install genuine Microsoft software to prepare the equipment for new owners — including those in need around the world. Visit the Refurbished PCs page and click on "Learn More" to contact a Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher.

2. **Use a quality recycling partner.** Choose a recycling service with certifications that identify them as a company that adheres to high standards of environmental responsibility. Look for certifications such as R2 Solutions, e-Stewards and WEELABEX to make sure you're working with someone that will recycle old technology in a safe and environmentally responsible way.

3. **Ensure your sensitive data is protected.** Be sure to erase sensitive data securely before disposing of electronic equipment. This is something that a Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher is also equipped to help with. Alternatively, people can do this themselves by backing up their data and wiping their hard drives. Visit the Microsoft Safety and Security Center for help with this process.

Stay current on Windows and Office support

For more information on upgrading to modern technology and safely disposing of old devices, visit the XP end of support page.