

Cisco's Reduce, Reuse, and Recycling Story

Reducing the Impact of E-Scrap

Discarded electronic equipment, known as e-scrap, is one of the fastest growing portions of the global waste stream. Rapidly changing technology and dramatic increases in technology adoption have resulted in an ever-growing flood of e-scrap — often containing hazardous materials such as lead and mercury — that finds its way into landfills.

Reducing e-scrap is a critical part of the Cisco® strategy to minimize the environmental impact of its products both during their lifecycle and after they are retired from service. The Cisco approach to managing e-scrap can help businesses of all sizes reduce their environmental impact. It includes:

- More sustainable product design
- Emphasis on recovery, reuse, and recycling
- Responsible recycling practices

More Sustainable Product Design

To help reduce e-scrap, a crucial element of the product lifecycle management strategy is to design products that can be easily recycled or reused. Beginning with product design, Cisco considers ease of recycling in all phases of the product lifecycle, addressing considerations such as cost benefits, material diversity, ease of disassembly, and end-of-life or disposal concerns.

In addition, Cisco is committed to reducing or eliminating hazardous materials in products, making them less environmentally harmful at the end of product life. For example, Cisco equipment complies with global environmental regulations such as the European Union's (EU's) Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive (RoHS), which limits the use of six hazardous substances, including lead, mercury, and cadmium, in the manufacture of electronic and electrical equipment.

Cisco is quickly moving toward environmentally sound lead-free solutions, working to replace lead in solders and pastes with materials that maintain equipment quality and reliability. The Cisco goal is to remove lead from the supply chain for all products by 2011.

Recover, Reuse, and Recycle

Cisco receives used product material from customers from stock rotations, trade-ins, returns for credit, returns for replacement, lease returns, and service returns. When products have reached the end of their useful life, they can be returned by the end user through the Cisco product take-back and recycle program.

All Cisco returned-material streams are part of an aggressive recycling and waste-reduction program that focuses on reusing as much of the returned material as possible and recycling the rest. With an emphasis on recovery, reuse, and recycling, the Cisco program is designed to maximize product reuse.

If possible, returned products are refurbished and reused. In FY07, US\$97 million in products and materials were refurbished or reused. Otherwise, Cisco implements a comprehensive scrap reduction program. Equipment to be recycled is de-manufactured, shredded, and recycled in an environmentally sound manner.

All Cisco branded products are accepted under the recovery, reuse, and recycling program. Cisco also works with customers to dispose of competitors' products. Businesses migrating from competing technology can trade in competitive products for credits toward new Cisco equipment.

Environmental Compliance and Responsible Recycling

Some e-scrap recycling vendors use irresponsible practices, such as ignoring worker safety and protection or exporting e-scrap to countries with poor environmental and labor standards. Cisco requires complete transparency from product recycling vendors to help ensure that they operate under strict environmental controls and implement the highest worker safety protection.

Cisco recycling vendors are Cisco approved; that is, they are selected based on strict internal vendor qualification guidelines. All are compliant with and certified under ISO 14001, an internationally accepted standard for environmental management; possess the appropriate country and theater licenses to allow them to transport and process electronic materials; and are audited and reviewed on a regular basis.

Recycling vendors use processes that comply with global and regional requirements, such as the EU Directive on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE Directive), which mandates that e-scrap be reused, recycled, or disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner. In addition, their practices meet all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines and comply with U.S. environmental laws at the national, regional, and local levels.

Cisco provides documentation about product disposition when the recycling process is complete. Upon request, Cisco can provide a Certificate of Destruction, which releases the customer from further liability for the equipment returned through the recovery, reuse, and recycling program.

Summary: Responsible Management of E-Scrap

The Cisco commitment to minimizing the environmental impact of its products is reflected in its approach to managing discarded electronic equipment, or e-scrap.

More sustainable product design makes it easier to recycle product materials and reduces or eliminates hazardous materials contained in products. Emphasizing recovery, reuse, and recycling of used products decreases the amount of material generated by Cisco facilities that reaches landfills. Finally, responsible recycling practices help ensure that product recycling is carried out under the stringent controls for environmental protection and worker safety.



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