

# Computer Upgrading & Recycling

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Thinking of a new computer? You can choose to upgrade the computer you have to make it perform a bit better or you can just buy a new machine. The big box stores will usually want to sell you a new computer. This may not be the best for you.

Ways to upgrade: Add memory. Replace your hard drive with a larger one. Clean up any unnecessary programs running in the background. Perhaps add a spiffier video card. Want the latest and greatest? Buy a new computer. Don't just rely on a salesman in a big store. Some of these big-box stores have sales staff that know what they are talking about. Unfortunately, some don't! Ask for advice from someone who knows what your needs are.

This brings us to what to do with your old equipment. Throw it away? Not a good idea. Recycling is available. Many times computer stores will offer to recycle your old machine. There are also places, such as Goodwill who accept donations of equipment that is still usable. Perhaps a local school or charity could put your old computer to good use. A cautionary note: If you recycle your old hard drive, your old data is still on it. It must be erased (not just "deleted"). An alternative is to destroy the disk with something like a large hammer or take it apart and smash the metal disks inside (a good project for kids who like to take stuff apart). Too many people don't realize that they are leaving themselves open to identity theft by leaving data on their hard drive. If you don't know how to erase the disk, get help from a trusted computer person.