IT ASSET RETIREMENT

RE-NEWS

CASCADE ASSET MANAGEMENT'S CUSTOMER NEWSLETTER

Quick Facts and Figures

Since Cascade opened in April, 1999, we've:

- Collected and processed over 68 million pounds of old electronics
- Paid more than $11 million in rebates to customers
- Refurbished and resold, redeployed or donated over 1,095,000 computer devices
- Demanufactured and recycled over 793,000 cathode ray tubes
- Prevented more than 3 million pounds of lead from entering of landfills
- Donated more than $396,000 worth of computer equipment to charities in partnership with our customers

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New storage technologies challenge wiping programs

Electronic storage device technologies are creating a buzz in the IT and IT Asset Disposal (ITAD) industries. New technologies continue to deliver greater speeds and storage capacities while reducing cost. Solid state devices (SSDs) that utilize flash RAM to achieve higher speeds have doubled in sales each of the last 3 years and the trend is expected to continue (50 million SSD devices are expected to ship in 2013). Magnetic hard drive sales should also grow as they remain a cost-effective solution for capacity and reliability needs.

Data storage experts Fred Spada and Steven Swanson from the University of California San Diego introduced some emerging technology trends at this year's National Association for Information Destruction (NAID) conference in Anaheim. Some exciting technologies on the horizon include:

Hybrid Drives that contain both flash storage (SSD) and magnetic storage components allowing utilization of both technologies. Selected data can be stored as needed to optimize speed and reliability.

Increased Magnetic Write Technologies such as Shingled Write Recording (SWR) and Heat Assisted Magnetic Recording (HAMR) are allowing magnetic drives to store much higher capacities of data.

Magnetoresistive Random Access Memory (MRAM) is a newer RAM technology that combines many of the best properties of other types of flash memory. MRAM can hold data while the machine is powered down (like SSDs) and storage doesn't degrade over time (like DRAM).

These technologies are also appearing in a more diverse group of IT devices, such as tablets, smartphones, and multi-function printers, as well as desktops, laptops, and data centers.

New data storage technologies will present some challenges to IT systems and ITAD processes, especially in regards to hardware security. Storage devices are taking on many different physical forms making identification of the devices more difficult. Manufacturers are using proprietary hardware and software combinations in which will require IT and security professionals to pay closer atten-tion to hardware storage and erasure needs. Current data removal tools like degaussers and sanitization software utilities will no longer be effective tools by themselves. Future devices may require manufacturer specific software to sanitize drives in many cases and more devices will be "self-encrypted" to mitigate risk. The UC San Diego researchers recommend data security practitioners use a multi-layered data sanitization and validation process to ensure data can be effectively cleared from these devices.

Competing storage device manufacturers are blurring the lines between technologies and how they are implemented. IT and data security professionals will need to be aware of changing storage technologies and adapt with customized and verifiable solutions.

Article written by Cascade's Operations Manager TJ Barelmann who recently earned the accreditation of Certified Data Destruction Specialist. Learn more about issues with data destruction on various storage devices at our web site and Cascade's Open House in May.

Secure, Responsible IT Asset Disposition for Enterprises, Healthcare Institutions, and Government

Indianapolis, Indiana * Madison, Wisconsin

How one healthcare organization manages IT Asset Disposal

As part of an effort to gather details on best practices from organizations grappling with IT asset disposition, Cascade interviews clients throughout the year and asks if we can share their stories to help educate others. The following story is based on a discussion with the Director of Enterprise Management at a prominent healthcare provider with six hospitals, numerous clinics, and more than 14,000 employees.

"If it is born here, it dies here." This best describes the philosophy of IT asset management at this $2 billion healthcare organization responsible for managing IT resource needs for over 14,000 employees in dozens of locations.

Nearly all IT assets procured for use in the organization are received into a central IT warehouse, imaged to meet the needs of the end users', and configured in conformance with institutional standards for security and control. All the while, the Director of Enterprise Management leads a team to identify, tag, and track purchased assets. When these IT assets are ready to be put in use, they are delivered to the appropriate hospital or clinic and set up using vehicles and staff from the organization's IT asset management program. Meanwhile, retired IT assets are collected and returned to the central IT warehouse for an assessment of whether they can be redeployed or need to be disposed.

This cradle to grave control helps the organization feel confident in its process to track all IT assets and ensure all data are carefully managed and protected. In addition, by centralizing the disposal program, they can better control where these computers eventually end up, so they aren't inappropriately dumped or exported.

One of the primary reasons this centralized internal IT asset management program works is because of the relative close proximity of all the sites in this network. All the facilities for this organization are located within 2 counties.

The IT asset management program follows a fairly strict refresh cycle and it is keenly aware when equipment needs to be replaced. Retired assets are quickly removed from their environment, and processed for outside disposition. Cascade assists the organization by performing regular collections of surplus assets and hauls away 300—600 pieces of equipment every 2—3 weeks.

By not storing unwanted assets for long, it can maximize any potential resale value for this equipment.

The most important consideration for IT asset management and disposition for this organization is security. When asked how much the HIPAA-HITECH Act affects the organization, our IT leader says there are "tons of policies—tons of procedures. And while we are working to encrypt all hard drives [for data security], there are still a lot of processes and documentation we expect from vendors that have anything to do with our infrastructure.

"It is very important to us that the IT disposition firm we work with knows and maintains strict compliance to HIPAA [HITECH Act] regulations," he says. "Everyone from the IT security team to myself—and all the way to the President's office—we absolutely need to know that all data [on outgoing equipment] is destroyed and will never be able to be recovered. HIPAA compliance is extremely important to us."

To document a clear and appropriate transfer of IT assets from the healthcare organization to Cascade, the two firms jointly developed an asset inventory and reconciliation process. The healthcare organization prepares a listing of equipment ready for disposal. Cascade staff then arrive on site and scan in collected equipment to make sure everything matches with the electronic inventory before the load is hauled away.

When asked about his confidence in Cascade security measures, our healthcare IT leader says that "there must be very good procedures in place to guarantee effective handoffs of equipment… and we must be able to absolutely trust the company we work with. They must be truthful, and they must be good at what they do. Cascade does this."

Another important consideration when disposing of electronic assets is environmental responsibility. "The environmental awareness program here is huge—we talk about 'going green' all the time," notes the Director of Enterprise Management. "Even screen savers here have reminders about being environmentally aware. Cascade is at the top of the pack with regards to being environmentally conscious."

Cascade is working to assist this organization with its sustainability reporting by tracking disposition activity for equipment processed for reuse and recycling. As a history of processing activity is developed, Cascade can report trends on disposal methods as well as the environmental impact of any reuse and recycling activities.

Overall, the success of the IT asset management program at this healthcare organization is the result of cradle-to-grave control of the assets in conformance to the standards of the organization, and in coordination with the disposition services offered by Cascade.