

Make One Change



AMERICANS DISCARD more than 100 million computers, cell phones, and other electronics each year. E-waste is piling up faster than ordinary trash, and it's more dangerous: Defunct desktops contain toxins like chromium, cadmium, and lead that can leach into food and water supplies if thrown into landfills. Cell phones have many of the same chemicals—and a wider effect: Congo gorilla populations have been reduced as forests are cleared to mine coltan, or columbite-tantalite, an ore used in cell phones. Louisville, Ky.-based Eco-Cell (www.eco-cell.org) is working with Zoo Atlanta to help: For every mobile phone dropped off at the zoo, Eco-Cell makes a donation to the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund.

Reports of companies dumping nonworking equipment in poor countries make many of us leery of donating. But here are reputable businesses you can use.

If your computer works, erase the hard drive (download ShredIt for \$20; www.mireth.com); then contact the National Cristina Foundation (www.cristina.org) to find a school or organization in need. Many computer manufacturers accept older models at no cost when you buy a new one. Parts of nonworking PCs can be donated or sold; dispose of the rest according to your local department of sanitation's regulations.

Give old cell phones new life. Sears, Home Depot, RadioShack, Cingular, Sprint, and Verizon accept, repair, resell, donate, and recycle cell phones and accessories; CollectiveGood (www.collectivegood.com) recycles phones for developing areas.

To toss all phones, ink cartridges, laptops, TVs, PDAs, cameras, or mp3 players, visit www.recycleforbreastcancer.org. The organization sends out prepaid shipping labels, recycles electronics for a profit, and donates the money to a breast cancer charity. Staples, OfficeMax, and Office Depot also have cartridge-return programs. ♻️

By ALISON LEIGH-GUERIN
Photograph By MARK LUND

PROP STYLING: COREY EVANS