

Waltham firm destroys sensitive data

CLEAN, From E1 replaced or defective equipment such as computers, monitors, printers, phone systems, fax machines and copiers.

As part of the scrap and surplus removal process, Clean Out Your Office takes out all unwanted equipment from businesses. If the material is deemed to have value, costs can be offset or revenue shared from sales. Material that's not resold gets recycled.

Note that many pieces of electronic equipment have been classified as hazardous waste and thus can't legally be disposed of in a Dumpster or a landfill.

Clean Out Your Office sends this equipment to ElectroniCycle Inc., a recycling company with offices in Gardner and Fresno, Calif., that breaks down the material into recyclable parts. All recycling procedures follow Environmental Protection Agency and state guidelines.

Clean Out Your Office also destroys disk drives to prevent any information leaks.

The company was started in February as a spinoff from Peripheral Parts Support Inc., a Waltham-based computer supply and repair firm that had been providing similar services for a year.

The need had grown sufficiently to prompt the creation of a separate company, according to CEO Joe Moir.

Also, the success of its sister firm, Clean Out Your House LLC, provided another incentive. The services that Waltham company has been providing to remove everyday clutter from homes could be applied to removing high-tech clutter from offices, says Moir.

Security concerns have also increased, he adds. "After the TJX scandal, we felt there was a real need for people to feel comfortable that their disk drive was being properly destroyed," he says referring to the heist of credit card infor-

mation from the Framingham company's computer system. "You can wipe a disk but that's time-consuming, and if the disk has a problem, a lot of times you can't wipe it because you can't get it to run." The company points out that a wipe or disk reformat can't guarantee complete information removal.

To destroy a disk drive, Clean Out Your Office first drills holes into the drive, rendering it inoperable, and then places it in a shredder.

Serial numbers of every destroyed drive are recorded and given to the company so it knows what information has been eliminated. Clean Out Your Office also provides pictures of the destroyed drives and a disk drive destruction certificate.

"This way a customer knows that everything has been completely destroyed," says Moir.

He notes that Clean Out Your Office is fully insured. It also benefits from the expertise gained through its association with PPS, which has been in the computer supply business since 1982, he adds.

Moir points out that electronic equipment used to have trade-in value, but technological advances have lowered costs and made many systems obsolete.

"In the old days, if someone brought in a piece of electronic equipment, the company would take the old one back," he says. "Not anymore. Now, companies are stuck with them and they don't know what to do with them. So you have excess e-waste laying around buildings and offices."

Moir recalls going to a company in downtown Boston and discovering a pile of 20 monitors in one closet and 20 printers in other closet.

"Equipment was scattered all over the place, on different floors," he says.

Clean Out Your Office provides the labor and, to lessen any disruption, offers an after-hour service, removing equip-

ment before 8 a.m. and after 5 p.m.

To remove equipment, the company charges \$100 an hour for labor. To recycle material costs 15 cents a pound and to destroy one drive costs \$8.

However, companies frequently don't end up paying a penny, says Moir. "If there's enough value in any of the equipment - and we research this - we use that to offset the cost of removal," he says. "And if the company has items of real substantial value, we do revenue sharing - a 50-50 split."

The decision to share revenue is made on a case-by-case basis, Moir notes.

Eighty percent of the companies that Clean Out Your Of-

fice has worked with so far have had their costs offset, he says. Clients have included The Stride-Rite Corp. and Eastman Kodak Co.

Clean Out Your Office may have a corner on the market, too. "Other companies destroy data and recycle, but I'm not sure how many others do the entire package - destroy the drives, pick up the equipment," says Moir. "We make it convenient for the customer.

"We're a source to get rid of e-waste safely. It's a green company, too, because if the equipment is not sold, it's recycled."

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Joe Moir, CEO of Clean Out Your Office LLC, shows how his company can destroy a computer disk drive.