

# UNDERSTANDING E-WASTE

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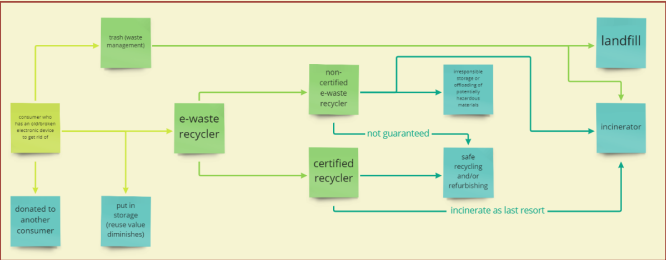
## HCW Use insights from our research to help educate the CU community on how to appropriately manage tech waste?

### Problem Landscape

#### What is E-waste?

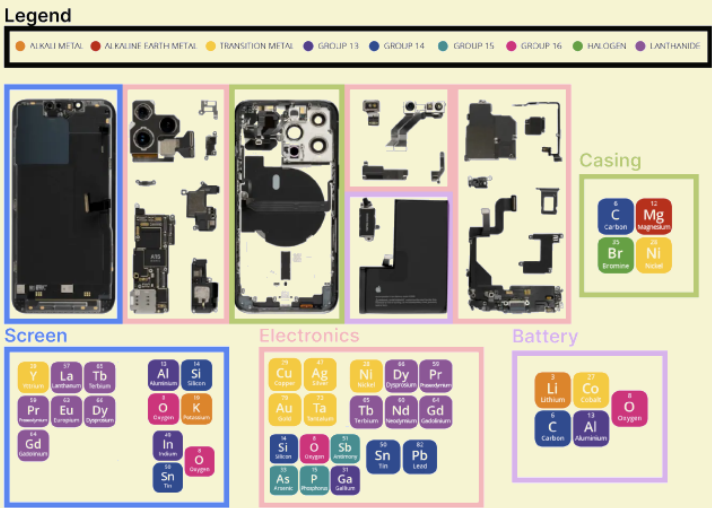
E-waste refers to any electronic device that is unwanted, nonfunctioning, or at the end of its useful life. It is the fastest growing trash stream. Improper disposal of e-waste raises concerns about resource efficiency as well as concerns about human health and our environment.

#### Where does my e-waste go?



source: <https://e-stewards.org/learn-more/for-consumers/overview/where-does-your-e-waste-go/>

#### Why are my consumer electronic devices hard to recycle?

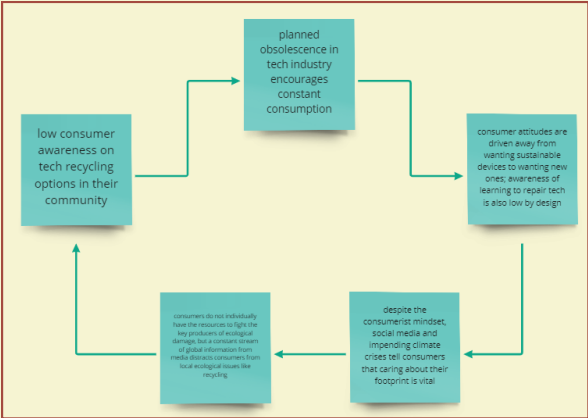


source: <https://www.azom.com/article.aspx?ArticleID=8012>

#### Why is E-waste recycling important?

Consumer electronic devices contain toxic chemicals that are hazardous to the environment and human health if improperly disposed. Recycling e-waste disposes of toxic chemicals safely, and allows rare raw materials to be reused.

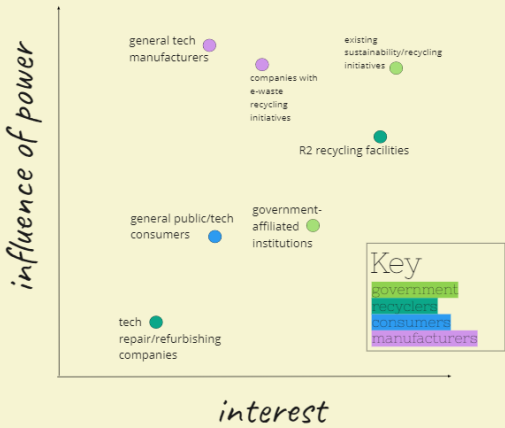
#### Why don't people recycle their e-waste?



#### Complicated By Design

Device manufacturers are driven by profit and to make their products match sleek mainstream aesthetics. This causes devices to not be easily repairable by consumers, and is a trend known as **planned obsolescence**. This trend in hardware is mimicked in software, too. Software is intentionally developed to be incompatible with older hardware, which forces users to upgrade their devices. The prevalence of planned obsolescence in software helps fuel a culture of constant consumption.

#### Stakeholders in the larger system around E-waste



### Solution Landscape

#### The biggest barrier is awareness

The issues of e-waste is a relatively new problem, but it is growing at the rate of globalization, if not faster. The true culprits of designing products that create more waste and improper e-waste management are manufacturers, but we can stay empowered through awareness of the issue. Personal choices like choosing to repair a broken laptop instead of buying new, participating in local e-waste collection, or tuning into how e-waste is managed globally, gives the consumer power back in a system with tipped scales.



#### Further Resources

##### Local (Places to find where to recycle)

- City of Urbana Website, CCES

##### Global (More information about e-waste)

- E-Stewards Recycling Network
- EPEAT Benefits Calculator

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