

Preparing Your Computer for Donation



With 36 million people in the U.S. without a computer, your donation can make a difference to those affected by this technology gap. Along with helping people in need gain access to the technology they need to thrive in our digital world, you also help the environment.

E-waste, or electronic waste, is one of the fastest growing forms of waste. It often contains harmful materials like lead, cadmium, mercury, and arsenic. If disposed of improperly, these materials can contaminate our air, water, and land [1].



GETTING STARTED

Whether you're donating your device to a non-profit organization for use by community members in need or responsibly disposing of it via a licensed recycler, there are some things you need to do first. Below, we outline some simple steps to prepare your device for donation or disposal.

1. BACKUP YOUR DATA

First, create a backup of your computer's hard drive so you can access necessary files after donation. Backup is the process of creating a copy of the data on your device for recovery in case your original data is lost.

For this, you'll need an external hard drive with the suitable amount of storage space. A one terabyte external hard drive should be appropriate in most cases. You can find an example of an external hard drive below.



It may be a good idea to migrate any files you need easy access to (documents, photos, videos, etc.) over to a separate flash drive.

You can see an example of this type of flash drive to the right. You can do this by dragging and dropping files onto the flash drive in addition to the steps above.



HOW TO PERFORM A FULL DISK BACKUP

A full backup is when a complete copy of all files and folders on a device is made. While full disk backups can be large and unwieldy, they are the safest, most complete backup option.

If you don't have any information to save, skip this step. If you choose to do this, keep reading to see how to do this for different operating systems.

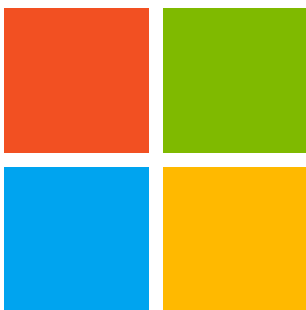


WINDOWS 10

This is the most common operating system. See an example of its log-in screen below.



WINDOWS 10 BACKUP INSTRUCTIONS



1. First, connect your external storage device to your computer using a cord and plugging it into a USB port.
2. On your Windows 10 computer, click on the Start button on the bottom right corner of your screen.
3. Then, type in and select Control Panel.
4. From there, select System & Maintenance > Backup & Restore.
5. Select Set Up Backup.
6. Then, follow the steps provided.
7. Make sure to save the backup to your external hard drive.

MAC OS BACKUP INSTRUCTIONS

If you have an Apple computer, these instructions are for you.

1. Connect your external hard drive to your computer.
2. Click on the Apple icon at the top left hand corner of the screen.
3. Then, select System Preferences > Time Machine.
4. From there, click Select Backup Disk.
5. Choose your external hard drive.
6. Wait until your backup is complete.



2. WIPE DATA FROM YOUR DEVICE

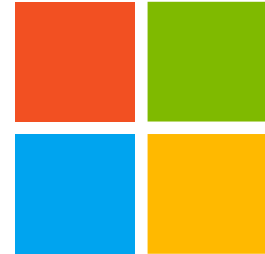
Next, you'll want to get rid of all of your personal data on the device you plan to donate. Make sure you backed up your data beforehand. While a backup saves your data to be recovered at a later date, wiping data erases it from your device's hard drive.

Once you begin this process your data cannot be recovered. By taking the steps on the following page, your data will be completely destroyed using a process from the manufacturer of your device.



WINDOWS 10 DATA WIPING INSTRUCTIONS

1. Click on the Start Menu at the bottom left corner of your screen.
2. Navigate to Settings.
3. Select Update & Security > Recovery.
4. From there, click Reset this PC.
5. Follow the instructions. If prompted to erase data "quickly" or "thoroughly," select the latter option.



MAC OS DATA WIPING INSTRUCTIONS



1. Make sure your computer is powered off.
2. Press the power button.
3. Hold down the Command and R keys as soon as you hear the Mac power tone.
4. Wait for the Mac OS Utilities screen to appear.
5. Then, click Disk Utility.
6. Choose your Mac's system drive, usually named Macintosh HD.
7. Then, click Erase.

3. SANITIZE

In the age of COVID-19, sanitizing your device before donation can go a long way. Household cleaning products and moisture, when sprayed directly onto a device, can short-circuit it. Use a computer-safe disinfectant wipe or microfiber cloth for your screen. Then, use alcohol wipes to clean your keyboard and case.



4. FIND YOUR DEVICE A GOOD HOME

If your device is still functional, you may want to consider donating it. However, you may not know where to bring your computer or other device you want to donate. Consider donating through Digitunity and our Digital Opportunity Network.

We make donating easy with our technology donation platform. In just a few easy steps, this online tool guides you through the process of donating your devices. You can find this resource at <https://digitunity.org/get-involved/give-equipment/donate-your-computer>.

HOW TO DONATE THROUGH DIGITUNITY

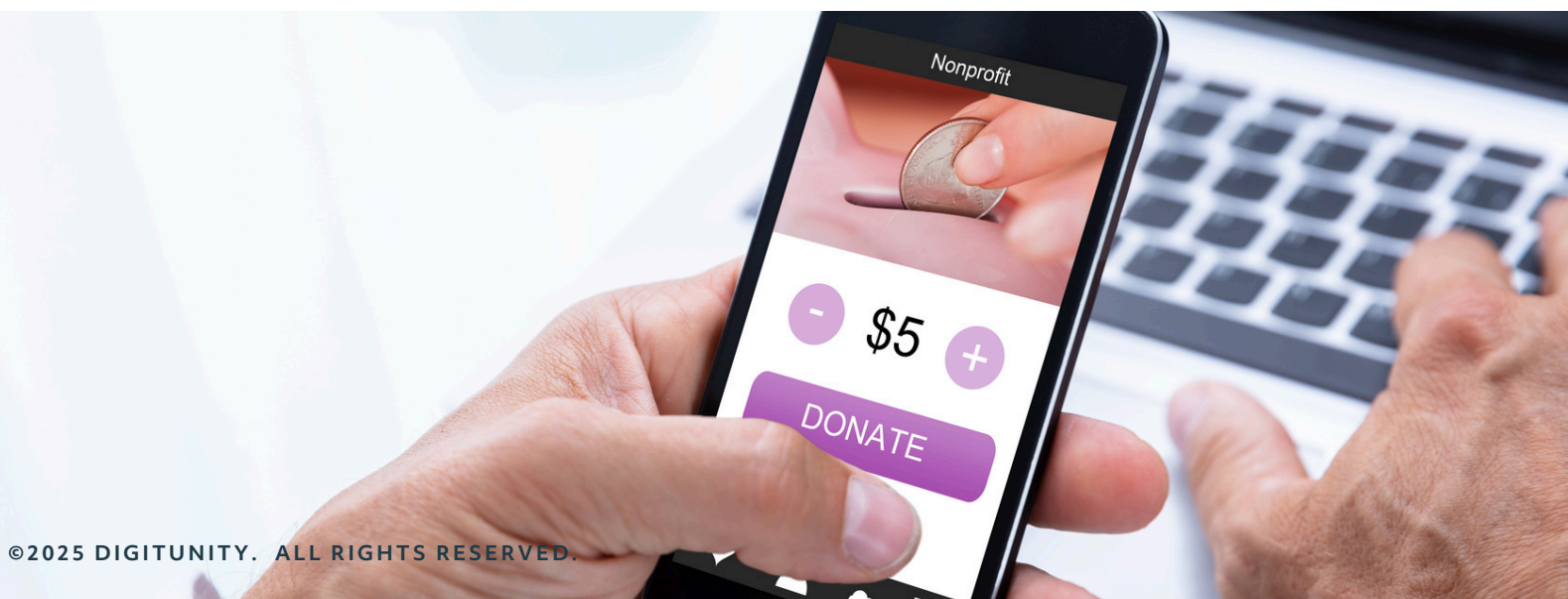
1. Enter your zip code into our recipient finder [here](#).
2. Browse the results.
3. Choose the pre-qualified organization closest to you.
4. Click "Donate Now" to begin the donation process.
5. Complete the donation form. Our system initiates contact with the chosen recipient.
6. Then, coordinate pick-up or delivery with the recipient organization.

Please note that while an effort is made to match all donors with recipient organizations, not every donated item can be placed.

OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT DIGITAL EQUITY

If you find your computer is not suitable for donation, but would still like to help Digitunity get computers into the hands of those who need them most, you can support our work by making a financial contribution [here](#).

If you'd like to recycle your device, you can find a certified recycler near you through either [e-Stewards](#) or [SERI](#). We thank you in advance for your commitment to digital equity for all.



About Digitunity

Digitunity is a 501(c)(3) public charity whose work advances digital inclusion by connecting donors of technology with organizations serving people in need.

Our mission is to ensure everyone who needs a computer has one, along with robust internet connectivity and digital literacy skills.



You can reach us by phone at (203) 863-9100, by email at info@digitunity.org, or by mail at:

Digitunity

120 N South Rd. Unit C #284
North Conway, NH 03860-5267

Resources & Citations

[1] <http://www.dep.pa.gov/Citizens/RecyclingDisposal/Electronics/Pages/default.aspx>

Suggested Products

1. External Hard Drive -

- a. Seagate Portable 1TB Hard Drive - <https://www.amazon.com/Seagate-Portable-External-Hard-Drive/dp/B07CRG7BBH>

2. Flash Drive -

- a. SanDisk 128GB Ultra Flair USB 3.0 Flash Drive - <https://www.amazon.com/SanDisk-Ultra-Flair-128GB-Flash/dp/B015CH1PJU>