

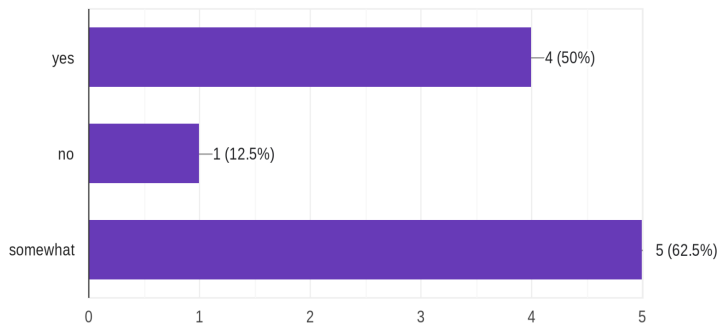
E-waste

And Why We Should Deal With It.

When you think of waste, you often think of plastics, and other such things in landfills and oceans. But have you ever stopped to consider your electronics, your e-waste? E-waste is a term used to describe discarded electronics, whether they are working or broken. This can range from computers and smartphones to refrigerators to lamps, and it is the world's fastest growing waste stream. We can, however, stop it from growing further by doing one simple thing.

Do you believe you know of the dangers of e-waste?

8 responses



We can stop our e-waste problem from getting out of control by recycling. Just to put into perspective how much more we need to recycle, 80,000 tonnes of e-waste is generated annually in New Zealand. Two percent of this is recycled. Only two percent. The rest is either dumped somewhere, in a landfill, or just sitting in a drawer in somebody's house. This is because people aren't aware of the idea that e-waste can be recycled.

Results of my e-waste survey prove that many people aren't fully aware of the dangers of e-waste

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13E9pYfPGAhS2pGruQePZ4mdEoRqj1BajeXwzKGJd0CY/edit#responses>

I believe we should recycle e-waste because of the terrible consequences of dumping, burning, or putting e-waste in landfills. E-waste is not biodegradable, meaning that if you dump it, it will just accumulate in the environment. Burning e-waste releases toxic substances called dioxins into the air, which increases the risk of cancer and chronic disease, especially for the workers who are in close proximity to it. Putting e-waste in a landfill can be extremely dangerous, because some electronic components contain lead and/or mercury, which can get into our soil and crops, or our drinking water. This can slow the development of children and it can poison us if we are exposed continuously to it.

If we don't recycle our e-waste, we are, as well as polluting our environment, wasting rare, finite resources. I want you to be very aware that there is more gold in 100 tonnes of smartphones than 100 tonnes of gold ore, as well as other rare materials such as silver, copper, platinum, and palladium. Wasting all of these resources is also not beneficial because mining more ore contributes far more to climate change than just recycling these devices.

In New Zealand, we have the principles of kaitiakitanga, which are based around the guardianship of our natural environment and resources. E-waste is essentially the opposite, destroying our environment in more ways than one. On a worldwide scale, we have the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. E-waste is relative to five of these goals. Nearly one third of them. Specifically, it is relevant to goal 3, because burning e-waste increases our risk of disease. Goal 6, because it pollutes our water with the toxic substances of the components. Goal 11, because it contributes to landfill and is often dumped in our cities. Goal 12, because we aren't sustainably managing our consumption of these electronics. Goal 13, because the unsustainable destruction of e-waste — and the unsustainable creation of new electronics— is definitely contributing to climate change.

With the e-waste production growing at its current rate, we will be producing 120

million tonnes of e-waste per year worldwide. Did you know that? It will most likely be even more. If we keep refusing to recycle, that is. In New Zealand, there are many dedicated e-waste recycling facilities that will accept your e-waste for a small fee. It's a small price for saving our world, because this issue boils down to unsustainable consumption. We need to take initiative, and other countries, such as Japan, Germany, and Sweden, already are. They have put into place anti e-waste laws, which has reduced the amount of e-waste they produce compared to countries without these laws. New Zealand has to step up too, or we will run out of time to fix this problem, time to stop this impending extinction at the hands of our own technological advancements. Take a stand against e-waste, to preserve our environment, to preserve our lives.



Depicts a stack of electronic devices in a landfill.

Madison Bryant, 14 years old, Waitakere College.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/05/maozine/e-waste-offers-on-economic-opportunity-as-well-as-toxicity.html>

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Madison Bryant

21 July at 14:23 · 🧑

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note this is a school project, i'm not an environment nerd

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<https://sites.google.com/waitakerecollege.school.nz/yre2023/home>

