



Rewriting the Rules for E-cycling

One electronics recycler is raising the bar for risk management and best practices in the industry.

For Technology Conservation Group (TCG), recycling electronic waste is not just the company's mission. It's a passion. The three owners of TCG, who have a combined 50 years of experience in the business, believe education is the key to environmental responsibility. "If the technology exists to handle the waste properly,"

says Hamilton Rice, president and CEO, "how can you let it be on your conscience not to do it?"

Founded in 1996, TCG, in Lecanto, Fla., has turned responsible recycling into a global business. Today, the privately owned electronic equipment processing and recovery company has facilities worldwide and is poised to become the largest and most proactive reuse, recovery, and recycling company

in the industry. TCG offers customers a comprehensive risk management program, not just recycling services.

A Booming Business

How big is the market for electronic recycling? Just imagine the mountain of computers, printers, monitors, and cellphones that businesses throw away every year and you'll begin to get an idea. According to ABI Research, an Oyster Bay, N.Y. firm that recently released a study tracking e-waste recovery and recycling, consumers and industry discarded 53 million tons of electrical and electronic equipment in 2009, a figure that is expected to reach 71 million tons by 2014. On a dollars-and-cents basis, ABI says the worldwide market for electronic scrap recovery will grow from \$5.7 billion in 2009 to nearly \$14.7 billion by the end of 2014. That's big bucks.

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The trouble is, not every recycler plays by the same rules. There are some that export to developing nations, where the scrap is often handled in an unregulated and unsafe way, according to the Electronics TakeBack Coalition, a network of nongovernmental organizations that have joined forces to persuade electronics manufacturers to recycle their products responsibly.

Above and Beyond

Industry leader TCG specializes in helping clients exceed even the most progressive recycling standards in a personalized, economically beneficial fashion. The company works to understand a customer's business and unique needs before creating a customized solution—involving reuse, remarketing, recycling, or destruction (or a combination)—for processing and final disposition. This not only relieves customers of the headache of dealing with sorting and disposing of electronic scrap and waste, but in most cases it also results in a financial return for their material. The ability to track and document end-of-life electronics and associated commodities, including waste materials, ensures the chain of custody ends with TCG, limiting client exposure. Certificates of Destruction and/or Recycling are provided to customers and can be issued by serial number, lot number, or weight, depending on what the customer requests.

As an industry leader, TCG has voluntarily adopted standards that go above and beyond what many industry watchdogs expect. A multi-site ISO 14001:2004-certified company, TCG exerts stringent controls over environmental liability and data security at each of its sites and employs on-site

environmental health and safety staff to monitor compliance with its global management system. TCG also conducts regular internal audits, detailed processor audits, and on-site auditing of downstream vendors to ensure procedural compliance. TCG carries \$10 million in domestic pollution liability insurance and another \$3 million to cover international claims, significantly more than most other electronics recyclers.

TCG's security standards include 24/7, centrally monitored security feeds at its facilities; metal detectors at employee entrances; and strict visitor requirements, including a nondisclosure agreement. TCG also requires that employees sign confidentiality and non-compete agreements. As a result, TCG has passed rigorous security and environmental audits performed by *Fortune* 100 companies.

When performing secure data destruction services, TCG adheres to the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Secure Erase standard, which exceeds Department of Defense protocols. The company is also a member of the National Association for Information Destruction (NAID), a trade association providing the standards and ethics for the information destruction industry.

TCG owns and manages 10 processing sites on four continents, in order to meet customers' needs no matter where they're located. That kind of agility, along with stringent and forward-thinking business practices, helps TCG set the pace in the electronics recycling industry. "We're focused on doing it right," says Rice, who is determined to set an example for all responsible parties. "It's not about adding to the bottom line." — Rosalind Resnick

Good Practices = Good Business

TCG's best practices for responsible e-cycling include allowing only accredited organizations to certify recyclers; making sure that sites adhere to local, state, and federal regulations; ensuring that environmental management and record-keeping systems are in place; conducting onsite audits and downstream due diligence; and monitoring export regulations and materials recovery and disposal.

- Conformity and Certification
- Exporting
- Legal Requirements
- Reuse, Repair, and Refurbishment
- Environmental Management Systems
- Materials Recovery and Disposal
- Recordkeeping
- Transport
- On-site Requirements
- Insurances
- Due Diligence Downstream
- Closure Plan and Financial Responsibility
- Data Destruction
- Facility Security

For more information on
Technology Conservation Group,
go to
www.tcgrecycling.com

