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## COMPUTER DISPOSAL POLICY

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EFFECTIVE: March 2003

### **POLICY:**

All university owned computers must be sent to Information Technology for security processing prior to being sent to University Stores for disposal in a CMU salvage sale. For those computers being redistributed from a college/department to another university operating unit, it is the responsibility of the sending college/department to ensure that all university and personal data files are deleted.

### **RATIONALE:**

Currently CMU computers are sent from various CMU departments and organizations directly to University Stores for salvage. Sensitive student and CMU personal data is left on the hard drives as well as university licensed software packages. Access to this sensitive information and licensed university software is available to anyone that purchases the salvaged equipment. This is an unacceptable practice and the university could be held liable for the release of student or CMU personal information, and/or a violation of software licensing agreements.

### **GUIDELINES:**

#### **Security Processing for Salvage:**

The Technology Support Department will use bulk eraser technology on each computer hard drive prior to releasing the computer to University Stores for salvage. This procedure will erase and possibly destroy track marks on the computers hard drive. This procedure will destroy all information on the hard drive, including data files as well as licensed application system software. Purchasers of the salvaged computers will need to be informed that a bulk erase process has been performed and that the computers, in order to become functional, will require a low-level of disk reformatting and an operating system. Bulk erase processing may permanently destroy the drive's usefulness.

#### **Security Processing for University Redistribution:**

It is the responsibility of the department/college to ensure that all University and personal files are deleted from a computer before it is transferred to another University operating unit. While it is possible for the previous user of the machine to manually delete all relevant files, and then use a disk utility program (like Norton Utilities) to permanently remove all traces of the previous files, please be aware that it does not guarantee the complete removal of files, and it relies on the thoroughness of the previous user or college/department technician.

The most conservative approach would be for the sending department/colleges to use one of the following methods:

1. If the computer(s) shipped with a system restore CD, use that CD to completely wipe all data from the Hard Drive, then reload the computer with the original operating system and software.
2. Both Windows 2000 and Windows XP provide a mechanism for repartitioning and formatting the original hard drive before installation. This method will completely wipe all data from the Hard Drive. Full time Faculty and Staff can obtain a copy of Windows 2000 or Windows XP through the Help Desk or Media Services.

Departments/colleges with departmental technicians are encouraged to contact their local technician for assistance with any of the above processes. In addition, University faculty/staff may contact the Help Desk for advice and/or have an Information Technology technician dispatched to their location. In the event of a site visit, time and material charges may apply.