

The River Cities  
**DAILY TRIBUNE**

'Living In a Tech World' Column

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### Spring Cleaning Your Tech World (Supplement)

I'll bet that I am not the only one that longs for the days when you could round up your entire unused household and personal items, put up a few signs, open the garage door and have garage sale. In these days of over controlled neighborhoods it is not likely that we will ever be able to do that again. But our new tech world has a reasonable and arguably better alternative.

I believe strongly in supporting our local organizations like local thrift stores, churches and the similar organizations. And I encourage all to continue that support. But I've recently joined another local Internet group called **Marble Falls Freecycle**. Freecycle is an innovative concept that harnesses the power of the Internet to do what the Internet does best -- eliminate the middleman and empower the individual. Unlike traditional charitable organizations that accept people's castoffs and sell them for low prices in shops, freecycling allows for personal contact between donor and recipient -- each gets exactly what they want, and nobody is considered a 'charity case'. It's a perfect consumer-friendly circle. You can list anything you want to get rid of for free and on the other side take up offers from those that list. The only limitation is that the item must be offered totally free.

Over that last few weeks there have been listings for beds, sofas, packing boxes, boats, bedding hay and much more. On the 'wanted' side people have asked for children's books for home schooling, picket fences, furniture, any framed pictures and almost everything an average person my want. The 'offering' listings usually only require the item be picked up. The 'wanted' listings generally give you insight into why the person needs the item to make you feel good about being able to help them out.

To take part, go to the website (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/marblefallsfreecycle/>), join with a user name and email address. As a member, you can choose to just visit the site to see what is offered or have the listings emailed to you either as they happen or once a day as a list. Give it a try.

There are also other ways to get rid of your old gadgets, computers, cell phones and such. The EPA website (<http://tinyurl.com/bbjger>) has a comprehensive list of places that help recycle. They have a directory of environmentally friendly ways to clean out that technology closet. Among those listed are many of the companies that sold you the stuff to begin with. Dell, Best Buy, HP and many others have trade-in programs for not only the items they sell but any other gadget.

If you have a computer that you are willing to give away try TechSoup. They help charities get low cost access to technology. Their Refurbished Computer Initiative (<http://tinyurl.com/cu4y9a>) takes donated computers, refurbish them, and offer them back to charities, fully warranted, at minimal prices.

If you want to sell a tech item, check out Gazelle (<http://www.gazelle.com/>). They will make you an offer on electronics including computers, iPods, cell phones, pda's and more. They make it extremely easy. You identify your item, fill in information on the details like amount of memory, accessories etc. They show an offer and a chart of the estimated value that they base the offer on. If you accept their offer they send you a postage pre-paid box, you send the item and when they verify that it is as represented they will send a check or make a deposit in your PayPal account. If they do not make an offer they will still accept the item and recycle it responsibly.

If you want more information on getting rid of your junk visit my website for these and other links.

To ask a question or learn more about VCC Digital's 'tech guy' services which include a cost saving Personal Computer Consultant annual contract for individuals or business or computer repair go to <http://vccdigital.com> or email [techguy@vccdigital.com](mailto:techguy@vccdigital.com)

-30-

#### **Supplement to Published Article**

**These are the items that generally fall under the special conditions set by the EPA for disposal that you should consider recycling instead.**

**Desktops: PC & Apple**

**Laptops: PC & Apple**

**Tablet PC's**

**Camcorders**

**Digital Cameras**

**Servers**

**Multimedia Projectors**

**Home Audio Receivers**

**Mobile Phones**

**Car Audio**

**Monitors**

**Game Systems**

**PDAs**

**MP3 Players**

**GPS Navigation**

**HD DVD**

**So if you have some of these items and would like to see if they have any resell value you can start with EZTradein.com <http://ez.eztradein.com/eztradein/calculators.cfm> and use their calculators to see what the item may be worth. This is the calculator used by their trade-in site partners such as Dell, Kodak, Best Buy, Toshiba and**

others. If you go to those sites you will use the same calculator just limited to the items they will accept. You can go to <http://ez.eztradein.com/eztradein/index.cfm> For a list.

Last week PC Magazine published The Electronics Superguide, an exhaustive list of Resell/Recycle Sources. To see their list of Manufacturers go to: <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2341908,00.asp>

For details on retailer programs go to: <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2341911,00.asp>

For details on Cash-Back sites go to: <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2341912,00.asp>

As you consider these buyers take note that many of them do not offer cash but pay you in a credit at their store or for their products. Those that pay cash generally offer a little less but you can spend it anywhere.

The website DealNews recently published another article comparing the top PC manufacturers trade-in programs. You can find it here: Best trade-in programs for your used tech - <http://dealnews.com/features/Upgrading-The-best-trade-in-deals-for-your-used-tech/275244.html>

Another option is EBay and Craigslist. If you give up on the idea that your electronics or anything else in your garage has any resell value you might try Earth911.com - Find Recycling Centers and Learn How To Recycle <http://earth911.com/>