

## 10 Tips for Parents and Carers: How to be Green with your Tech

All National Online Safety, we believe in empowering parents, carers and trusted adults with the information to lead an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one of many issues which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit [www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com) for further guides, tips and tips for adults.

### 10 tips for parents and carers HOW TO BE GREEN WITH YOUR TECH

Right now, humans aren't living sustainably: we're taking too many resources and not leaving the world in a fit state for future generations. Old tech products are a clear example: if we throw them away, the poisonous lead and mercury inside can get into the food chain through the soil. Recycling tech, though, has its own issues: it's often exported to countries where the law doesn't protect people from hazards. Whole villages (including children) sort through discarded devices to remove useful parts and substances like gold, silver and copper – often putting their health at risk. Finding ways to re-use tech is the greenest option.

So what can we do with those cupboards and drawers full of old phones and unwanted computers?  
**Reuse, recycle, donate or sell them!**

- 1 DONATE THEM TO CHARITY**  
There are lots of charities that redistribute unwanted tech to worthy causes, either in the UK or in developing nations. If your old products are still working, this is a great option – as it means that new products don't have to be made. Search online for your nearest place that does this.
- 2 REMEMBER THE BATTERIES**  
Almost all batteries can be recycled – even the little 'button' ones from smaller gadgets. You could choose a box at home or school to keep used batteries in, and then take them to a designated place that collects them. Be very careful, though – button cells can be deadly if eaten by small children or pets.
- 3 USE YOUR ONLINE SAFETY KNOWLEDGE**  
If you're recycling, selling or repurposing any of your devices, make sure that all your personal data, private photos and so on have been deleted before the tech leaves your hands or is connected online.
- 4 REUSE THEM**  
Old smartphones can be used as webcams, security cameras, baby monitors or pet cams: there are apps that will configure them to do this. You can also turn an outdated phone into a TV remote control, an alarm clock that wakes you up with your favourite track, or a media centre you can take to places where you wouldn't risk your new phone.
- 5 TURN IT INTO SOMETHING NEW**  
Smartphones are more powerful than most older computers. If you have an unwanted android phone, it's quite easy to create a new computer – you could use an old TV as a monitor, meaning you just need a mouse and keyboard. There are also small devices you can buy which let you do the same with iPhones.
- 6 RETURN THEM**  
Return devices to the manufacturer or retailer you bought them from. Some manufacturers take responsibility for their products and accept them back to be refurbished and redistributed. If they don't, you could contact them and ask why: the more consumer pressure there is on shops and manufacturers, the more likely they are to act in a greener way.
- 7 SUPPORT SCIENCE**  
Let your old devices help modern research. Scientists currently investigating topics like far-off star systems, cancer treatment and earthquakes need enormous computing power. If your unwanted device is left enabled, for example, you can connect it to a network so that it can boost scientists' research.
- 8 SELL THEM**  
This is also a green option as it means that fewer devices have to be produced. On top of that, you could also donate some of the money you make to an environmental charity.
- 9 RESEARCH DISPOSAL METHODS**  
If your device is beyond repair and no one wants it, get rid of it safely through a specialist tech disposal company. Check that your device won't be shipped off to another country for processing.
- 10 KEEP THINKING**  
There's no such thing as 'too many' ways to help our planet! If you come up with a better idea than our's, contact National Online Safety and tell us.

**Meet Our Expert**  
Neil Allen teaches scientific literacy through his non-profit organisation, Rubbish Science, which engages people in working together to live more sustainably and creatively uses waste to help address real-world problems. There are a range of environmental activities you may like to try on their website: [www.rubbishscience.com](http://www.rubbishscience.com).

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#WakeUpWednesday

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Remember the heatwave back in July? Temperatures topping 40° in the UK, wildfires in mainland Europe and severe droughts across the continent. It's clear evidence of how much global warming has started influencing the weather in this part of the world. Climate change has been described as "the fight of our lifetime", and it's a battle we have to win.

The Great Big Green Week is an event designed to inspire people to stand up for nature and tackle climate change together. In support, our #WakeUpWednesday guide this week is all about how we can each do our bit to help the planet by re-using or recycling unwanted digital devices such as old smartphones, computers and tablets.

Devices like smartphones, tablets and computers aren't quite as disposable as we'd like. Sometimes, they're simply thrown away and end up as landfill; often, components such as lead or mercury contribute to pollution of our soil; and even if we *think* we're being green by recycling, old tech can still be harmful to those people who physically handle it.

To mark #GreatBigGreenWeek, we've produced a special #WakeUpWednesday guide with tips on how we can be greener with unwanted gadgets and gizmos – from disposing of batteries safely or supporting environmental charities to repurposing old phones as TV remotes or security cameras. Check out our ideas and do your bit to help the planet!

Please [click here](#) to download the guide