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As Technology is getting smarter daily our ways of producing and manufacturing them have to get smarter along with it. The U.S averages 4.5 Billion pounds of electronic waste per year according to Intercon. The EU estimated 8.5 million tones of e-waste per year. We have to make find a way to educate people on how to dispose of these products properly or change our way of making these products all together.

What I found most disturbing was that these electronics were being shipped to poor countries in Africa such as Ghana. Countries like these do not have the funding to dispose of them properly so they are left to be burned. This is destroying the air quality and causing all kinds of intestinal and lung cancers from the exposure to these dangerous heavy metals. Dr Michael Braungart (managing director of EPEA) discovered that there are 200-300 carcinogenic chemicals off-gassing from burning of a computer. One computer here was traced back to Australia and when the company manager, Geordie Gill, that shipped it here said that environmentally safe recycling is a expensive process. This is ridiculous because there is gold in the memory parts, computer chips, motherboard, and floppy disk. Aluminium can be found inside the cooling pieces, and copper in the transformers and resistors. There is a need for companies to smelter these metals give you money for them and then place them on the commodities market. Another problem is that people are gathering the harddrives from these computers in Ghana leading to the gathering of peoples personal and company information .

What we need is a Cradle to Cradle system described in the book by William McDonough. First the consumer purchases the product leading to education , then returned to company useful for disassembly, disassembly for obtaining raw materials and 100% raw material recovery used to make new technology. An example of this is what Philips did with its' television made out of recyclable aluminium resulting in 60% less energy consumption. Another step in the right direction is what the University of Maryland did this last week with the development of a sodium ion battery using nano-sized wood particles. Liangbing Hu, Teng Li and their team found that wood fibers are supple enough to let their sodium-ion battery last more than 400 charging cycles, which puts it among the longest lasting nanobatteries.

Overall technology has made information abundant. I have gained so much knowledge from the Internet and I continue to learn everyday. As much as these technologies are helping us in our daily lives we must make them ecofriendly as well. There has to be a way to make going green the better choice economically and environmentally. There is hope in this field with companies like Best Buy and South Eastern data but more must be done to make this a mandatory requirement of all citizens of the world.

Sincerely, Sean Prell (student of Johnson and Wales University)