



Old Gadgets, New Clutter:

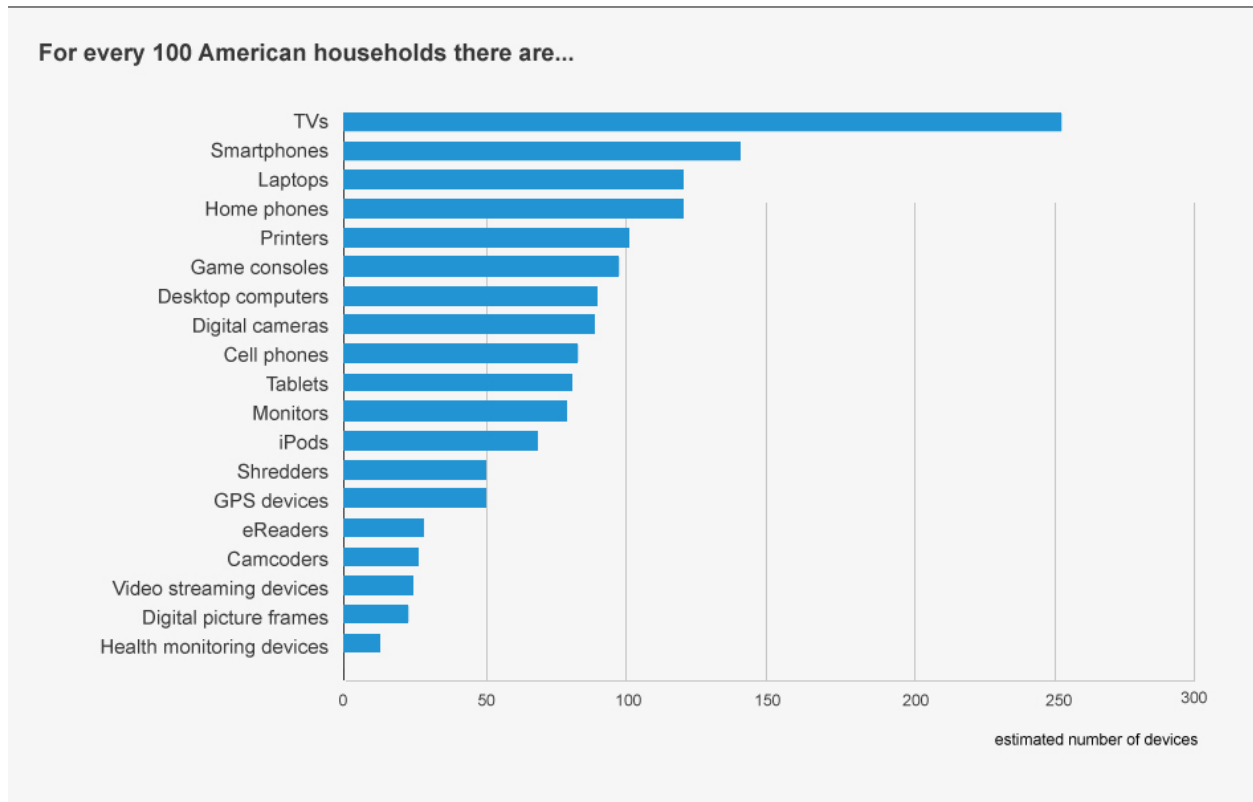
Americans Hoard Electronics Instead of Recycling Them

Americans tend to own several technological devices, many of which they say are unwanted, according to new research released by Staples Inc. But while many say they have an excess of gadgets laying around the house, demand for the latest technology continues to rise. And, while we continue to buy more devices, and receive unwanted ones as gifts, there's resistance to the fact that old devices can be recycled.

These are the key findings of the study, American Tech Recycling Habits, which was commissioned by Staples Inc.*

Ownership: America is gadget happy

One of the key objectives of the survey was to explore the current status of American tech ownership, and more specifically what Americans do with their gadgets, especially after they've become outdated or replaced.





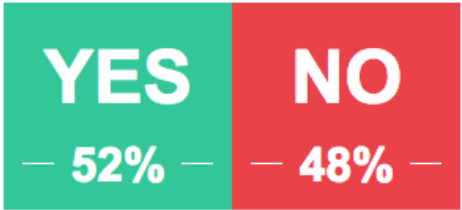
The survey found that most Americans own several tech devices: the vast majority of the American population owns a smartphone (70%), a laptop (76%), and a TV (92%). For every 100 American households, there are 139 smartphones, 119 laptops, and a startling 252 TVs. The study's findings make it clear that American households like to be well connected, but perhaps more surprising is the number of devices *each person* owns. More than a third (38%) of Americans own 2 or more smartphones, and 28% own 2 or more laptops. Those numbers pale in comparison to the 74% of Americans who own 2 or more TVs, and 47% who own 3 or more TVs.

Demand for gadgets is not slowing down

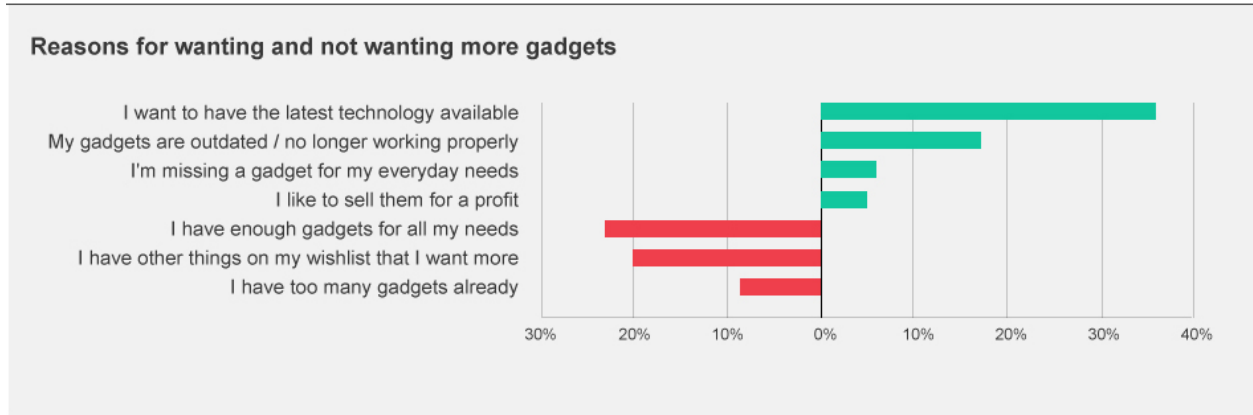
Despite the large number of devices each American owns, demand isn't slowing down. Quite the opposite, actually: consumption is on the rise, with 52% of Americans saying they'd like to receive more gadgets this holiday season.

Would you like a gadget as a gift?

Out of the respondents who said they would like to receive new gadgets this holiday season, 36% said it was because they would like to own the latest technology available.



It seems as though the desire to own gadgets and the latest technology has become so pervasive, that Americans gift technology almost as a default--even if the recipient doesn't want new devices. Over half of respondents (56%) said they have received an unwanted gadget as a gift. But that begs the question, what are Americans doing with all of their extra and unwanted devices?



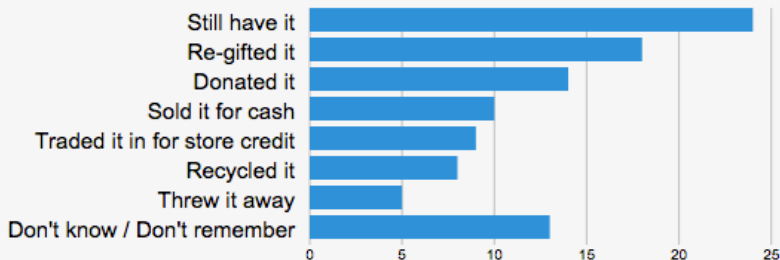
What happens to all the old/unwanted tech?

While over half of Americans have received unwanted devices as gifts, only 4% recycled their unwanted gadgets. Those who received unwanted devices were more likely to hoard them (13%), re-gift them (10%), or sell them for cash (6%) than recycle them.



What have you done with the unwanted gadget?

(of those that received one)



Gifting isn't the only way Americans end up with unwanted devices, many consistently replace old devices. More than a third of respondents (36%) replaced their smartphones less than a year ago, and 23% replaced their TV in that same time period.

And, of those who have replaced gadgets in the past year, few recycled the old one (11%). In fact, more people threw their old gadgets in the trash (13%) than recycled them. People are also more likely to hoard devices because they don't know what to do with them (16%), than recycle them (11%).

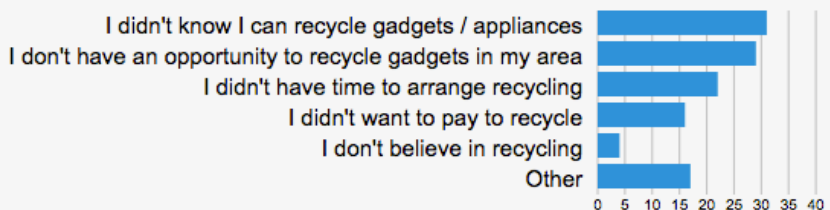
Tech vanity: Americans avoid buying refurbished tech because it isn't "brand new"

One of the goals of the study was to explore the relationship between American's tech buying habits and refurbished devices--more specifically, whether or not Americans are willing to buy refurbished devices as a way to save money and reduce consumption.

It turns out that 55% of Americans have not purchased a refurbished device, some of those (17%) hadn't done so because they were not aware it was an option. However, the majority of people (62%) who hadn't bought a refurbished device, did so because they prefer to buy technology that is "brand new."

The second most popular reason (20%) for not buying refurbished gadgets is because people don't want an item with cosmetic defects, and 8% said damaged packaging isn't appealing.

Reasons that people do not recycle their gadgets



So while refurbished products are a way to reduce consumption and reuse products, most Americans would rather have new products.



Recycling: Americans think it's a nice idea but many are too lazy to do it

While Americans generally don't prefer to buy refurbished products, many *do* like the idea of recycling their old devices. The vast majority of people (89%) believe recycling is good for the environment, and most report recycling at home (79%).

But despite good intentions to recycle, 24% (29% among 18-34 year olds) think that recycling is inconvenient and takes too much time. On top of that, of those who don't recycle, 21% don't because it takes too much effort, while 52% don't have access to necessary facilities.

When it comes to recycling gadgets specifically, even fewer people take the time and effort. Only 11% of people recycled the gadgets they replaced in the past year. People prefer to either hoard (16%) or throw away (13%) old gadgets, than to recycle them (11%).

Smartphone users were some of the worst recycling offenders: 36% of respondents have replaced their smartphone in the past year, but only 8% of those recycled their old one.

It seems that misinformation is one of the main reasons people don't recycle their old devices. More than one in four (27%) people kept their old smartphone because they didn't know how to dispose of it. Additionally, 31% of respondents didn't know they could recycle gadgets - rising to 40% among 18-34 year olds.

Conclusion

Jake Swenson, Director of Sustainable Products & Services for Staples, Inc.

"We launched this survey in conjunction with our own efforts to offer more sustainable services that make it easier for people to recycle their unwanted gadgets, and to gain a better understanding of consumers' tech recycling habits in general.

"The insights that were discovered help us strategize new ways to evolve our [Technology Trade-In](#) program** in 2015 and are an eye-opening look into the habits and recycling knowledge of those we're hoping to help."

**The survey of 1,006 randomly selected American adults was conducted from October 21st to October 23rd 2014. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 3.1%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to education, age, gender, region, and ethnicity American Community Survey data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of America.*

***<http://www.staples.com/sbd/cre/marketing/staples-technology-trade-in/>*