

# Giving Old Technology a Second Life

## A Practical Guide to Reusing Computers and Phones

Old computers and phones often still have years of useful life. With a modest amount of effort, they can be restored to working condition and placed in the hands of someone who truly needs them.

This guide outlines the basic tools and resources used to rehabilitate devices and return them to service.

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### Rehabilitating a Computer

#### 1. Evaluate the Device

- Does it power on and function?
- Is it worth modest investment (battery, charger, RAM)?
- Rule of thumb: only invest if the result will be genuinely usable

#### 2. Securely Erase All Data

- Protects the prior owner's privacy
- Creates a clean starting point

Recommended tool:

- Active@ KillDisk (by LSoft Technologies)  
<https://www.killdisk.com>

#### 3. Install a New Operating System

- Linux Mint  
<https://linuxmint.com>

Linux Mint is free, stable, and well-suited to older computers. It includes many everyday programs and continues to receive updates for several years.

### 4. Add Essential Software

- Web browsers: Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox
- Office tools (included): word processing, spreadsheets, presentations
- Media and utility programs

**Result:** A fully functional computer that can remain useful for another 5–10 years.

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### Tools That Save Time

#### Multi-Boot Installation USB

- Ventoy  
<https://www.ventoy.net>
- Allows multiple operating systems on one USB drive

#### System Cloning (Fast Deployment)

- Foxclone  
<https://foxclone.org>
- Copies a fully configured system to another computer in minutes

- Avoids hours of downloading and updating
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### **Reusing Phones**

Phones are often even more important than computers.

- Essential for job searches, healthcare, and daily communication
- Smartphones can be reset and reused
- Even basic flip phones provide reliable voice contact

### **Affordable service options:**

- Mint Mobile (plans starting around \$15/month)
- Verizon prepaid plans
- T-Mobile prepaid plans

**Key idea:** Some phone is better than no phone.

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### **When a Device Cannot Be Saved**

Some equipment is too old or too damaged to reuse. Responsible recycling prevents environmental harm.

Possible local options (availability varies):

- Goodwill Industries
- uBreakiFix

Check locally, as recycling programs change over time.

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### **Why This Work Matters**

- Reduces electronic waste
  - Extends the useful life of existing technology
  - Provides access to communication and opportunity
  - Helps individuals stay connected to work, family, and services
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### **Getting Started**

If you have an unused computer or phone:

- Consider donating it
- Or try refurbishing one yourself using the tools above

A device that seems obsolete to one person can be life-changing to another.

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