

SECURING THE FUTURE

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Why stockpiling hard drives can be harmful to your business – the need for proper electronic media destruction protocols

In this issue, we will discuss how stockpiling your old hard drives makes your organization more vulnerable. This begs the question: why take the risk?

Many Canadian businesses, both large and small, may not realize that the most effective way to properly dispose of hard drives and electronic media is to destroy them. The issue is new enough that many companies' safety protocols and procedures don't account for unused hard drives and electronic media. Instead, businesses often store items with confidential information on them in a storage closet under lock and key. Despite both the short and long-term negative consequences, many Canadian businesses appear to follow this process because they are unaware of the risks to themselves and their customers.

It's under lock and key so it's secure, right?

As technology evolves, misconceptions have emerged about hard drive and electronic media security. For example, locking up old hard drives in an IT closet or an off-site storage facility is often perceived as a safe option, despite being a target for data thieves. Even if organizations use software to erase, wipe, reformat and degauss electronic devices, it may not fully protect you – confidential data from obsolete



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hard drives can still end up in the wrong hands. Carelessness is just as dangerous, with improper destruction potentially leading to a costly breach that could damage your company's reputation. This begs the question, why risk it?

Shred-it's 2012 Information Security Tracker survey, which assessed the opinions of small and large Canadian businesses, demonstrated that 55 percent of Canadian businesses mistakenly thought that erasing, wiping or degaussing their devices before recycling them was enough to protect their confidential information from being lost or stolen. Another 19 percent of Canadian businesses indicated that they simply recycled their old electronic media. Further, 10 percent said they didn't know how their business was disposing of its aging or obsolete computers, or other data-storing devices such as smartphones or photocopiers. Given the importance of destroying a hard drive, it's startling to think that **only 16 percent of businesses across Canada reported using this method of destruction.**

But we are secure – this would never happen to our company!

Could it though? Recently, there was a massive data breach in Canada when an employee at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) lost a portable hard drive containing personal information from over half a million students¹. Even though this occurred in November 2012, the department didn't advise the public until the new year². The hard drive contained the names, social insurance numbers, birth dates, contact information, and loan balances of 583,000 Canada Student Loans Program borrowers.

You might be quick to point out that this is not your business and you may think that it wouldn't happen to you. You may follow policies and procedures, but do all of your employees do the same? While investigations into the HRSDC's loss of data continue and those affected are receiving information about protecting themselves, the information breach has once again raised red flags around workplace policies and procedures.

The Canadian Human Resources Minister has called for stricter protocols. Below is a list of best practices to implement in your workplace to avoid data theft, including:

- Consider performing regular clean-outs of storage facilities and avoid stockpiling unused hard drives

¹ http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2013/02/01/victims_of_hrfdc_student_loan_privacy_breach_banding_together_and_fighting_back.html

² <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2013/02/07/student-loan-privacy-double-letters.html>



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- Destroy all unused hard drives using a third-party provider who has a secure chain of custody to help give you peace of mind and ensure your data is being kept out of the hands of fraudsters
- Consider conducting regular reviews of your organization's information security policy to incorporate new and emerging forms of electronic media

Why put your company at risk?

The cost to destroy hard drives is minimal when compared to the potential risks faced when you don't. Shred-it, the world leader in document destruction, can permanently destroy confidential information at a low cost that will fit your budget. Not only that, hard drive destruction is the most effective way to permanently destroy all information. Shred-it's secure chain of custody ensures pick-up and destruction of the unit within two business days, with a Certificate of Destruction issued for your files. At the end of the day, Shred-it's Hard Drive Destruction Service will offer more than just a certificate; it offers the peace of mind you deserve as a member of the Canadian business community.

Shred-it's Hard Drive Destruction Service fully destroys hard drives, memory sticks and photocopier memories, rendering them completely useless and beyond repair. This offering also allows businesses and IT professionals to track their information destruction history by issuing a Certificate of Destruction that lists all electronic media that has been destroyed along with individual serial numbers.

What types of electronic media can be destroyed?

- Hard Drive (any kind of laptop, desktop, PATA, SATA and many more)
- Backup Magnetic Tapes (any kind of DLT, mini cartridges and many more)
- Floppy Disk (3.5 inch disks, 5.25 inch disks and many more)
- Zip Disk (100 MB, 250 MB and other large disks)
- Optical Media (CDs, DVDs, Blue Ray and HD DVDs)



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Why should you consider Shred-it's Hard Drive Destruction Services?

✓ 100% DESTROYED	Only by destroying your hard drives will they be useless to identity thieves
✓ 100% SECURE	Shred-it's chain of custody process provides end-to-end security
✓ 100% ASSURED	Shred-it will provide an itemized Certificate of Destruction for you to keep for your files
✓ 100% PEACE OF MIND	Shred-it offers a risk-free alternative to stockpiling, erasing, reformatting or degaussing obsolete or unused electronic media
✓ 100% SHRED-IT	25 years of proven and total commitment to secure information destruction

Your FREE Security Consultation

Learn more about Shred-it's Hard Drive Destruction Services. Visit us at:

www.shredit.com/hard-drive

You can also visit Shred-it on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) or follow us on [Twitter @Shredit](#).



About Shred-it

Shred-it is a world-leading information security company providing document destruction services that ensure the security and integrity of our customers' private information. The company operates 140 branches in 16 countries worldwide, servicing over 150,000 global, national and local businesses, including the world's top intelligence and security agencies, more than 500 police forces, 1,500 hospitals, 8,500 bank branches and 1,200 universities and colleges.

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