



# **ANGLAIS**

## **THE SERIOUS PROBLEMS OF E-WASTE**

You may remember my previous article, "What to do with old computers." Many wrote to say they were simply donating their old equipment to schools in Mexico, and Europeans were sending theirs to other nearby third-world countries. So, people feel good at having helped the underprivileged.

5 But it turns out "donating" electronic equipment causes BIG problems. It passes downstream costs [...] to under-developed countries, which most often do not have adequate environmental regulations. Poor countries simply accumulate the dangerous hazards of electronic waste. The "donations" end up not being recycled, but as hazardous waste.

10 With accelerating technological change, rapid product obsolescence <sup>(1)</sup> makes electronic products "disposable" very quickly. The lifespan of a computer has shrunk from four or five years to about two years. [...]

15 Electronics, the largest and fastest growing manufacturing industry in the world, aggressively promotes a culture of fast obsolescence and increased consumption. And the environmental consequences are disastrous. E-waste is the fastest growing portion of waste in developed countries. And neither the industry, nor the consumers, bear the downstream costs – disposal of enormous quantities of wastes produced.

E-waste includes computers, monitors, televisions, cellular phones, DVDs, VCRs, audio equipment, and video games. [...]

20 Now there are as many as 1 billion surplus or obsolete computers and monitors. If not managed, the environmental clean-up costs will soon be in billions of dollars.

This enormous waste contains billions of pounds of hazardous materials [...] and more than 1,000 different toxic substances harmful to human beings and the environment if not disposed of properly. Thrown into landfill,<sup>(2)</sup> these substances leak <sup>(3)</sup> and can eventually pollute groundwater.

25 Import of e-waste mainly from the US and Europe under the guise of "donation" is already causing havoc in some poor countries. After some initial use, recyclers resell parts, and the rest burn in illegal dump yards, often near poor, residential areas. Old electronics often lump into municipal waste and then burn, releasing toxic carcinogenic <sup>(4)</sup> substances into the air.

30 There is an immediate need for collaboration between industry, government, environmental groups, and citizens to solve the problems of e-waste, e-scrap, e-surplus, e-junk, and e-discards.

There are two immediate solutions, which must happen through a combination of legislation and voluntary stepping-up-to-the-plate by manufacturers.

**By Jim Pinto**

[http://www.isa.org/Content/ContentGroups/News/20051/April28/Pintos\\_Point\\_The\\_serious\\_problems\\_of\\_e-waste.htm](http://www.isa.org/Content/ContentGroups/News/20051/April28/Pintos_Point_The_serious_problems_of_e-waste.htm)

### **FOOTNOTES :**

(1) State of being old, out of use

(2) or dump yards: décharges publiques

(3) fuir, (fuite de liquide, gaz, etc.)

(4) substances causing cancer

**I READING COMPREHENSION (08 marks)****A. TRUE / FALSE: Justify, quoting from the text. (2 marks)**

1. Although Jim Pinto admits that offering old electronic equipment poses a problem in the South, he thinks it is something positive.
2. The computer industry has nothing to do with the e-waste problem in developing countries.
3. Donated old electronic equipment does not serve people for a long period of time.
4. Individual initiative can help solve the e-waste problem.

**B. Complete the table with information from the text. (3.5 marks)****E-Waste in Developing Countries**

Causes of fast growing e-waste	Economic impact	Environmental and human consequences
5. -----	8. -----	9. -----
6. -----		10. -----
7. -----		11. -----

**C. Circle the word or expression which means the same as: (1.5 marks)**

12. "under the guise of" (line 25) means under the
  - a. guidance of
  - b. name of
  - c. pretext of
13. "causing havoc" (line 26)
  - a. destroying
  - b. growing
  - c. helping
14. "stepping-up-to-the-plate" (33) means
  - a. investment
  - b. participation
  - c. production

**D. Find in the text sentences which are the equivalents of the following. (1 mark)**

15. The life of a computer is shorter now than a few years ago.
16. E-waste increases quicker than any other kind of waste produced in the North.

**II. LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE****(08 marks)****E. Complete the space provided with the correct form of the word in brackets. (2.5 marks)**

\_\_\_\_\_ (grow) in e-waste production in the Third World presents a serious \_\_\_\_\_  
 17 18  
 (ecology) issue since electronics is promoting a throwaway culture and creating a \_\_\_\_\_  
 19  
 (consumption) society. This may have a \_\_\_\_\_ (damage) consequence if governments do  
 20  
 not \_\_\_\_\_ (provision) sustainable solutions.  
 21

**F. Put the verbs in brackets in the correct tenses or forms. (2 marks)**

When the engineer opened the computer he \_\_\_\_\_ (find) that many parts \_\_\_\_\_ (be)  
 22 23  
 removed.  
 What about \_\_\_\_\_ (collect) the e-waste in developed countries and getting the  
 manufacturers  
 24  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (recycle) it ?  
 25

**G. Reformulate the sentences without changing the meaning. (2 marks)**

26. European countries were sending old electronic equipment to developing countries.  
 Old electronic equipment \_\_\_\_\_
27. Don't dump your waste here!  
 You are not \_\_\_\_\_
28. Awa said that she liked electronics and was quite ready then to work in the industry.  
 Awa: " \_\_\_\_\_
29. Although he was an ecologist, he didn't contribute much to protect the environment.  
 In spite of \_\_\_\_\_

**H. Find the questions corresponding to the underlined words. (1.5 marks)**

30. I'll have to speak to the authorities about this matter.  
 \_\_\_\_\_
31. They used to collect waste every other day.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**III. WRITING : Choose a topic and write a passage of not more than 150 word (4 marks)****Topic One:**

Do you think that developed countries are really helping developing countries when they donate their old electronic equipment? Give you opinion.

**Topic Two:**

Should local authorities encourage dumping grounds like "Mbeubeuss" or should they favour the recycling of wastes? State your opinion.