



2026 Consumer Technology Recycling and Reuse Study

The Authoritative Source for Consumer
Technology Market Research

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Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is to determine:

- *The importance and awareness of recycling among U.S. adults*
- *How U.S. households get rid of consumer technology devices*
- *Consumer motivations for getting rid of technology devices*
- *How U.S. households discard packing materials for consumer technology devices*
- *Consumer views on planned obsolescence and device longevity*

Results throughout the report are among **U.S. adults** (also referred to as **consumers**), unless otherwise noted.

Methodology

CTA's 2026 Consumer Technology Recycling and Reuse Study was administered as an online survey among 2004 U.S. adults (aged 18-plus) from May 12 to 26, 2026.

The margin of sampling error at 95% confidence for aggregate results is estimated to be +/- 2.2%. Sampling error is larger for subgroups of the data. As with any survey, sampling error is only one source of possible error. While non-sampling error cannot be accurately calculated, precautionary steps were taken in all phases of the survey design and the collection and processing of the data to minimize its influence.

CTA designed this study in its entirety and is responsible for all content contained in this report. CTA is a member of the Insights Association and adheres to the research and analysis guidelines set forth in the Insights Association Code of Standards and Ethics.



2026 Recycle & Reuse Technology Themes



U.S. adults strongly support technology recycling, but participation opportunities remain to grow efforts.

- Most (87%) U.S. consumers believe that recycling technology products is important.
- Recycling at a designated recycling facility is the preferred method among consumers, with many (■%) already doing so.
- However, ■% are unaware of where they can recycle tech, and ■% are unsure how ■ technology is recycled after reaching a recycling center.
- Throwing technology away happens about ■% of the time, typically driven by ■.



Consumers see an opportunity for increasing technology longevity.

- A majority (■%) believe planned obsolescence occurs. Among them, ■% report having personally experienced it, most commonly in ■ (■%) and ■ (■%).
- An overwhelming ■% of consumers expect technology to be supported beyond ■, and ■% have had to stop using devices because of ■.
- ■ U.S. consumers (■%) believe manufacturers can increase technology lifespan with ■.

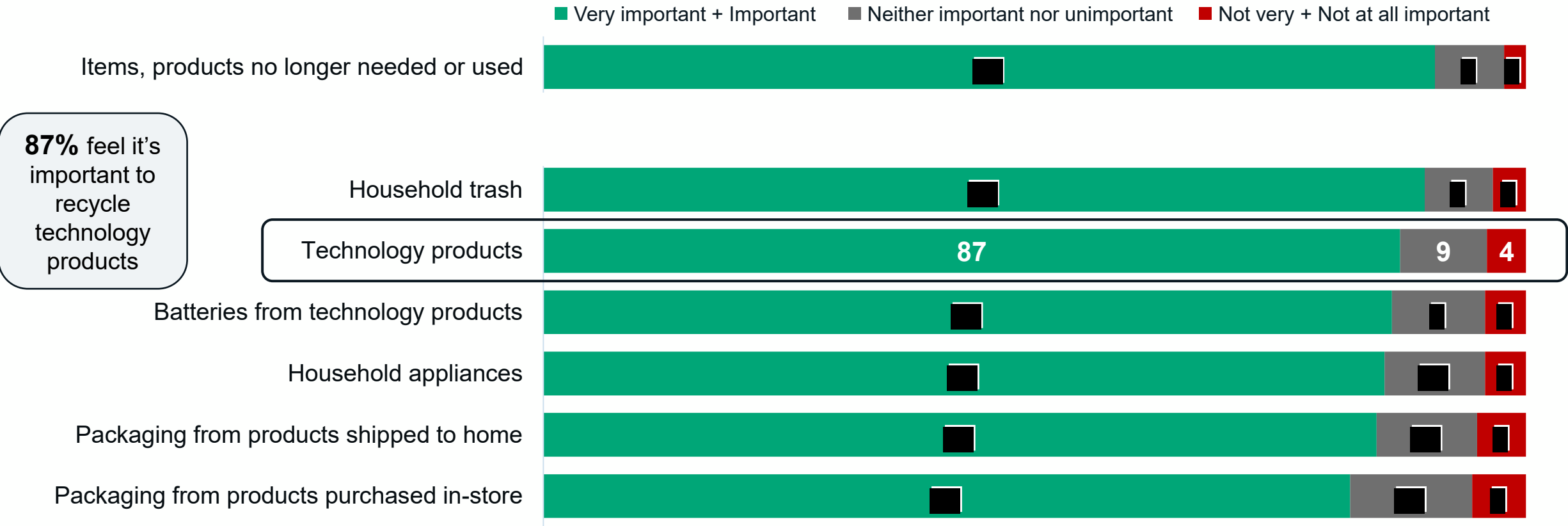
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Nine in ten U.S. adults feel product recycling is important but feel less so about product packaging

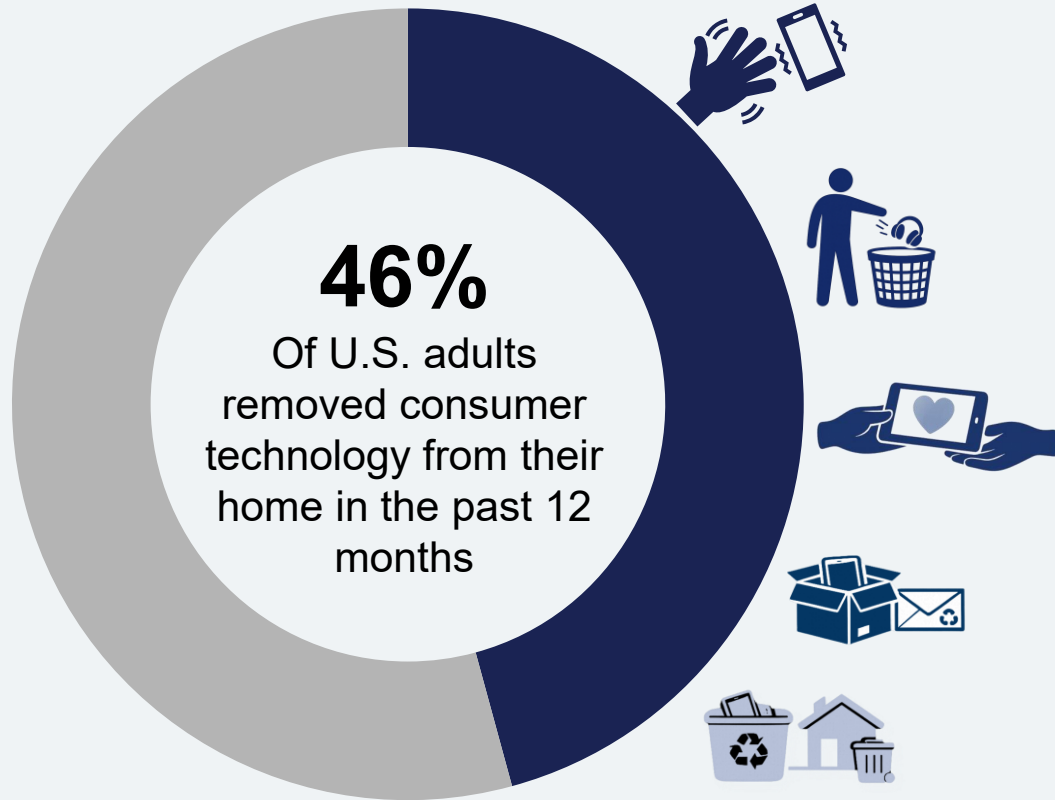
Recycling Importance by Household Items (%)



Q. How important, if at all, do you feel it is to recycle items or products that you no longer need or use? (Base: 2004, U.S. adults)
Q. How important, if at all, do you feel it is to recycle this/these? (Base: 2004, U.S. adults)

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Nearly half of U.S. adults got rid of at least one technology device within the past year



Technology removal rates are significantly higher among:

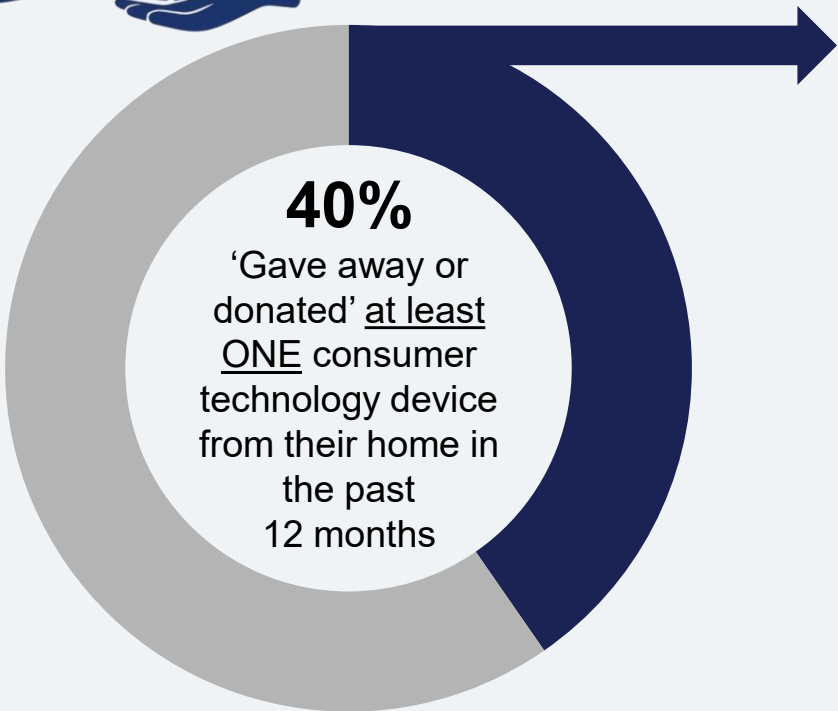
- **Older Millennials: █%**
(vs. █% all other age cohorts)
- **Households with children: █%**
(vs. █% those without children)
- **Household incomes of \$150k+: █%**
(vs. █% for <\$75k)
- **Northeast region: █%**
(vs. █% Midwest and West)

See appendix supplement (link) for more details by device type.

Q. In the past 12 months, how many of the items that were in your home have you **gotten rid of**, if any? (Base: 2004, U.S. adults)

Two in five ‘gave away or donated’ a technology device with top recipients being family, friends and charities

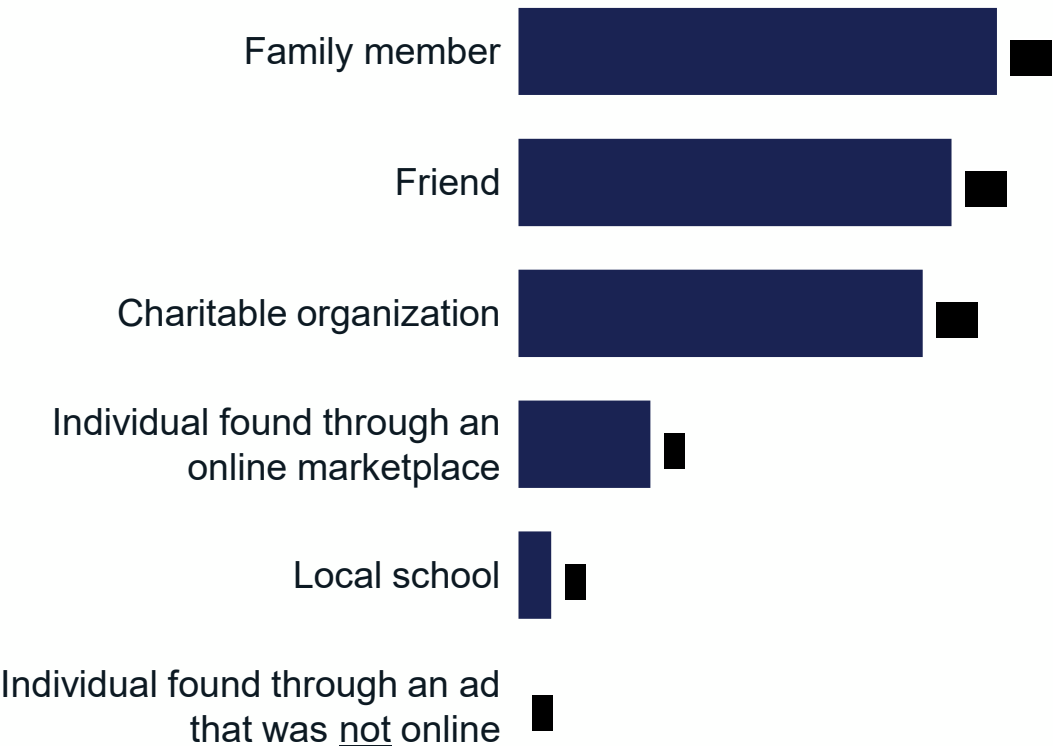
Of U.S. adults who removed technology in the past 12 months



Recipients of Recently ‘Given Away’ | ‘Donated’ technology (%)

Among the 40% who ‘gave away or donated’ tech.

Note: Consumers answered for the device they ‘gave away or donated’ most recently



Q. You indicated you **got rid of** a device in the past 12 months... how many were disposed of in the following way(s)? (Base: 917, U.S. adults who removed technology from home P12M)
Q. Thinking about the device you **gave away or donated** most recently, who did you give it to? (Base: 370, U.S. adults who gave away or donated technology P12M)

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CTA quantifies the size and momentum of the industry through a variety of reports, tracking sales volume and revenues for hundreds of tech products. Our reports include one- and five-year forecasts and monthly forecast reports for select hardware categories. For more information, contact John Kehoe: jkehoe@CTA.tech.



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CTA Market Research publishes consumer technology studies addressing the U.S. and international markets using the full spectrum of quantitative and qualitative techniques. Topics range from the emerging technologies to in-depth examinations of consumer behavior related to tech. For more information, contact Steven Hummel: shummel@CTA.tech.



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