



NAVIGATING THE UPCOMING WAVE OF AI LAPTOS

A Whitepaper by
CentricsIT



A Refresh is Coming

For those who own and use laptops and PCs, change is coming. Like any market, end-user technology goes through refresh cycles, and this one will be more intense than most. Laptop and PC purchasing surged in 2020 with the rise of remote work, and these devices are nearing the five-year mark. But that's not all. Windows 10 is going End-of-Life, rendering incompatible devices obsolete. Those looking to replace their devices will be faced with manufacturers pushing new AI capable laptops, which they hope will revolutionize the way we work. Between aging PC populations, Windows updates, and the introduction of AI PCs, users and IT leaders alike will soon have to make decisions regarding these endpoints, balancing cost, practicality and sustainability.

Aging PC Populations

With the pandemic came a surge of laptop and PC purchases, as hybrid and remote work became commonplace. Gartner reports that worldwide PC shipments grew 10.7% in the last quarter of 2020¹ and 32% in the first quarter of 2021.² In the following years, however, purchasing has remained stagnant as users continue to rely on the PCs purchased in 2020 and 2021. After four years of use, many users and organizations find themselves with aging hardware that will soon reach EOL. Between normal wear and tear and aging hardware that cannot keep up with software advancements, users and decision makers are starting to consider what's next.

Windows 10 EOL

Microsoft has announced that Windows 10 will enter EOL October 14, 2025, giving users a limited timeframe to update to Windows 11. Windows 11 features several updates to ease user experience, including an updated user interface, seamless redocking, and Windows studio effects.³ It is estimated that 32% of Windows users have already made the switch, but 64% still have a decision to make.⁴ While newer laptops may be able to handle the change, many users and decision-makers time major updates with hardware upgrades.⁵ Combined with aging hardware, the introduction of Windows 11 may be the push IT leaders need to upgrade.

The Introduction of AI PCs

The artificial intelligence boom has led to the introduction of AI PCs. However, use cases for AI PCs are not yet relevant for the average worker. What separates an AI PC from a traditional PC is the inclusion of a neural processing unit (NPU).⁶ An NPU will make the PC able to execute AI tasks without requiring the cloud. Unfortunately, there is no existing "killer app" for the AI PC, according to a recent report by Forrester, which predicts that 2025—not 2024—will be the "year of the AI PC."⁷ Users are speculating that use cases will be more tangible with the launch of Windows 11 24H2, which includes the controversial Microsoft Recall—a feature that captures and stores all user activity by taking screenshots every five seconds—and the more helpful live captions, studio effects and Copilot Runtime.

PLANNING FOR A MASS DECOMMISSIONING: A WHITEPAPER BY CENTRICSIT

An Influx of E-Waste

Between aging PC populations, the end of Windows 10 and the rise of a new breed of laptops, 2025 is shaping up to have a significant increase in sales as users upgrade their laptops. In May 2024, Gartner predicted that AI PC shipments would reach 22% of total PC shipments in 2024, and that 100% of PC sales in 2026 will be AI PCs.⁸ The question remains—what happens to all the replaced laptops?

Canalys predicts that 240 million PCs—roughly a fifth (20%) of existing devices—will become e-waste when Windows 10 support ends.⁹ Many of these devices are not compatible with Windows 11, leaving them vulnerable and buggy. This software update means that it's the end of the road for many devices, but it doesn't have to be the end.

To get the most out of your end user devices, turn to an ITAD provider.

IT Asset Disposition for End User Devices

Despite the sheer volume of devices that will no longer be usable after the Windows 11 refresh, an ITAD provider can help you stay secure, mitigate environmental impact, and get the most value out of your devices.



Security

Security should be the top priority for organizations decommissioning their IT hardware. All hardware carries residual data on it, and for those that can be remarketed, this data must be dealt with. An ITAD provider takes over this data destruction, providing certificates of data destruction proving that each has been wiped according to the organization's specifications.



Sustainability

E-Waste is a global problem, rising by an estimated 2.8 million tons annually.¹⁰ Every device that can be remarketed helps slow this growth, and every device that is properly recycled is one less device contaminating soil and groundwater. ITAD providers prioritize reuse, helping to address the e-waste crisis one device at a time.



Value Recovery

IT asset disposition is a way for businesses and users to get the most out of their old devices. It prioritizes value, so eligible devices will undergo wiping and reselling. For devices that can no longer be used—because of Windows 11 or other reasons—the device will be destroyed and valuable elements recovered and recycled, diverting waste from the landfill and providing funds that can be put towards purchasing new PCs and laptops.

WE ALL KNOW HOW IT ENDS

We live in an increasingly digital world, but what about the one outside our door? ITAD isn't just about enterprise IT hardware. As more employees are working with aging laptops and PCs, you have to think about what happens to them at EOL. ITAD for End User Devices takes these devices and refurbishes or recycles them, giving them a new life. Learn more about what your old equipment can do.

CentricsIT, with over 17 years of expertise, continues to lead the way in ITAD, emphasizing data security, resale opportunities, environmentally conscious recycling, and a commitment to certifications and compliance. To ensure quality, our ITAD facilities maintain ISO 14001, ISO 9001, ISO 45001 and R2v3 and destroy data to ensure HIPAA, FACTA, GLB, SOX, PCI and GDPR compliance. For more information about our ITAD programs, schedule a consultation.

¹ Gartner. "Gartner Says Worldwide PC Shipments Grew 10.7% in Fourth Quarter of 2020 and 4.8% for the Year." Gartner.com. <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2021-01-11-gartner-says-worldwide-pc-shipments-grew-10-point-7-percent-in-the-fourth-quarter-of-2020-and-4-point-8-percent-for-the-year>

² Gartner. "Gartner Says Worldwide PC Shipments Grew 32% in First Quarter of 2021." Gartner.com. <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2021-04-12-gartner-says-worldwide-pc-shipments-grew-32-percent-in-first-quarter-of-2021>

³ Microsoft. "Compare Windows." Microsoft.com. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/compare-windows-11-home-vs-pro-versions>

⁴ StatCounter. "Desktop Windows Version Market Share Worldwide." StatCounter.com. Accessed September 2024. <https://gs.statcounter.com/windows-version-market-share/desktop/worldwide/#monthly-202308-202408>

⁵ Microsoft. "Find Windows 11 specs, features, and computer requirements." Microsoft.com. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/windows-11-specifications>

⁶ Intel. "What is an AI PC?" Intel.com. <https://www.intel.com/content/www/us/en/newsroom/news/what-is-an-ai-pc.html>

⁷ Forrester. "The Year of the AI PC Is 2025." Forrester.com. <https://www.forrester.com/report/the-year-of-the-ai-pc-is-2025/RES180718>

⁸ Gartner. "Gartner Forecasts Worldwide AI Chips Revenue to Grow 33% in 2024." Gartner.com <https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2024-05-29-gartner-forecasts-worldwide-artificial-intelligence-chips-revenue-to-grow-33-percent-in-2024>

⁹ Canalys. "The end of Windows 10 support could turn 240 million PCs into e-waste." Canalys.com. <https://www.canalys.com/insights/end-of-windows-10-support-could-turn-240-million-pcs-into-e-waste>

¹⁰ United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). "Global e-Waste Monitor 2024: Electronic Waste Rising Five Times Faster than Documented E-waste Recycling." unitar.org. <https://unitar.org/about/news-stories/press/global-e-waste-monitor-2024-electronic-waste-rising-five-times-faster-documented-e-waste-recycling>