



# TOP 7 THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN AN ITAD PROVIDER

The disposing of technology devices that have reached end-of-life—servers, monitors, disk drives, mobile phones and other assets—is a big challenge today. The proliferation in the number of IT devices has made electronic waste, or e-Waste, the fastest growing municipal waste stream today; it is also an acute focus of laws and industry regulations addressing both the environmental aspects and the potential for unauthorized disclosure of private data in assets that are disposed of inappropriately.

All of this has resulted in more companies entering the market to provide IT Asset Disposition (ITAD) services.

Is the ITAD vendor you are considering up to the job? Find out by focusing on these seven key capabilities:

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|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Secure Chain of Custody | 5. Sustainability |
| 2. Data Security           | 6. Transparency   |
| 3. Physical Security       | 7. Remarketing    |
| 4. Operational Scalability |                   |

## 1. SECURE CHAIN OF CUSTODY

Any ITAD vendor under consideration must be able to provide you with data you can use to establish an audit trail verifying the proper disposal of your IT assets.

This data would include a fully documented chain of custody—a complete, unimpeachable record detailing the who, what, where and when of the handling of your retired devices. To determine if the vendor can provide this information, ask questions such as:

- › Are devices that become part of the ITAD process marked for disposal with a scan code and logged in an inventory?
- › Are devices tracked through the entire disposition process with the tag scanned at each handoff point?
- › Does the inventory management system flag any missing items and create an exception report?

## 2. DATA SECURITY

Before your data-bearing IT devices are remarketed for reuse or recycled, it is essential that they be checked and fully sanitized of any sensitive data. Otherwise, you will be risking the same potential lawsuits, regulatory action and brand damage that would result from any other kind of data breach.

Simply deleting data or reformatting storage media is not enough. Those processes only remove digital pointers to data, not the data itself. Even disk drives that have been fully reformatted or rendered inoperable may still contain recoverable information.

Key questions to ask include:

- › Does the provider offer data destruction services that comply with the NIST SP 800-88 standard for media sanitization?
- › Is the provider able to offer on-site, witnessed destruction?

### 3. PHYSICAL SECURITY

A proper ITAD program must meet stringent requirements for physical security. From the moment you turn over your devices and the information they contain to an ITAD provider you are exposing your organization and your customers to potential data loss and risk of regulatory non-compliance. In any ITAD undertaking, the risk of devices going physically unaccounted for is a one that must be appropriately managed.

To determine whether an ITAD provider is serious about physical security, ask questions like:

- › What kind of background checks do employees undergo?
- › Are vehicles enabled with GPS, alarm systems, locking mechanisms, driver proximity controls and dual key ignition immobilizers?
- › Is there tracking at key transition points and an auditable workflow to ensure proper procedures are followed?

### 4. OPERATIONAL SCALABILITY

When it comes to securely disposing of retired IT assets in an environmentally responsible way, scale adds complexity: the more there is, the more challenging it is to do it properly.

While many ITAD providers can support a small number of locations, when you start to consider the ongoing needs of numerous offices, data centers, remotely located employees and ongoing IT asset refreshes, the challenge becomes much greater.

To find an ITAD provider with the resources to maintain operational consistency across different locations and markets, here are some key questions to focus on:

- › Is the provider primarily local? Regional? Or does it have a national (and international) footprint?
- › Does the provider own its own fleet of trucks and utilize a workforce of vetted employees or is it relying on multiple third-party carriers?
- › Is there digital tracking that can pinpoint the location of an individual piece of equipment?
- › Are the facilities for processing assets fully secure, including badged security and caged areas?
- › Does the provider possess mobile destruction units to accomplish onsite, witnessed destruction at the client location?
- › Are field employees backed by in-house experts with knowledge of and expertise in industry regulations or laws?
- › Does the provider have the financial resources to stand behind all liability related to a data breach or environmental violation?
- › Can the provider handle both traditional business locations (e.g., offices, data centers) as well as employees working remotely?
- › Is the provider “future ready”, with a defined roadmap and an ongoing commitment to evolving its services to keep pace with the e-Waste challenge and the expanding regulatory environment?

### 5. SUSTAINABILITY

A commitment to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) initiatives used to be a ‘nice to have’ or an afterthought for the enterprise. But increasingly this is no longer the case. ESG driven by the C-suite is a hot topic, and these initiatives often have specific and measurable target goals associated with them. The responsibility for supporting ESG goals is often shouldered by IT leaders and their departments. They need the support of vendors they can partner with who will proactively support the attainment of their company’s ESG business level goals.

Key questions to ask include:

- › Does your company have programs that can support our company’s ESG business goals and initiatives?

- › Does your company have an ESG business plan and measurable goals?
- › Is your process certified by an independent, standards-setting body like e-Stewards or R2?
- › Do your guidelines include a no-overseas and no-landfill policy?
- › What is your experience in working with the complex environmental regulations at the local, federal, and international level?

## 6. TRANSPARENCY

Customers should never be in the dark about the status of their retired IT equipment. An online tracking system should be available and easily accessible enabling customers to identify the precise location and status of their equipment, while also providing the ability to place an order and monitor its process.

Ask:

- › Will we have access to a portal that provides full information on where our IT assets are located throughout their journey?

## 7. REMARKETING

By actively reselling end-of-life IT assets, ITAD providers enable enterprises to extend the useful life of these devices in a sustainable way while also lowering their Total Cost of Ownership. The ability to successfully remarket your retired IT assets will be determined both by their residual value as well as by the size and scope of the ITAD provider's remarketing network. It's important to determine the viability of that network.

Inquire the below to ensure proper remarketing:

- › Do you have a remarketing network that includes multiple channels such as end-user sales, proprietary auction networks, partner channels (e.g., system integrators, VARs, consultants, maintenance companies) and wholesalers?
- › Do you offer a Fair Market Value price lock?
- › If the hardware has insufficient end-of-life value, do you recycle it responsibly?
- › Do the same security and chain-of-custody measures utilized during e-waste recycling apply to the remarketing process?

## CONCLUSION

Providing ITAD services that are both environmentally responsible and protect against inadvertent disclosure of data requires a specific set of capabilities and expertise. To find the ITAD provider that is right for you, take advantage of the information provided here as well as the wide range of resources available on [ironmountain.com](https://ironmountain.com)

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### ABOUT IRON MOUNTAIN

Iron Mountain's Secure IT Asset Disposition services enable you to securely dispose of end-of-life IT assets in an environmentally responsible manner through our certified partner organizations. You can maximize your asset value recovery with industry-leading logistics and secure chain-of-custody processes.

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