Western Electronic Product Stewardship Initiative Meeting Summary
Recycling System Subgroup
September 25, 2001

Members in Attendance

Leslie Byster, Oregon Center for Environmental Health
Kent Dunn, Quantum Resource Recovery
Mike Heth, NxtCycle
Sego Jackson, Snohomish County
Serena Lee, PRR
Craig Lorch, Total Reclaim
Tim Northern, HRC
Will Perry, Seattle & King Co. Public Health
Greg Sampson, StRUT
Lisa Sepanski, King Co. Solid Waste
Gary Wivag, Gless LLC
Oso, FreeGeek

Other Members

John Heffernan, Computers for Kids
Scott Klag, Metro
Cate Gable, WEPSI Staff
George Lundberg, Epson Portland Inc.
Wayne Rifer, Rifer Environmental (WEPSI staff)
Ivy Sager-Rosenthal, WashPIRG
Dick Schmidt, City of Portland OSD
David Stitzhal, Full Circle Environmental (WEPSI staff)
Lori Stole, Recycling Advocates (WEPSI staff)

Summary The formation and introductory meeting of the subgroup occurred during the September 25 multi-stakeholder meeting in Seattle. This summary reflects the broad interest and varied problems that are represented by the current end of first life responsibilities.

The largest disposal & recycling problem – Monitors, CRT's and televisions in the waste stream represent the most difficult present and near-future problem in e-waste.

- Digital television transmission will be implemented in the next 5 to 10 years.
  - All current televisions will require conversion hardware to function;
  - Many TVs will be replaced to enjoy advantages of higher definition;
  - The industry has taken no responsibility for the material flow from this planned obsolescence;
  - Under current rules households are allowed to send these to the landfill [except in CA, MASS and a few other states].

Reuse Unique problems exist to incorporate the solid waste hierarchy of Reduce, Reuse, then Recycle into the material handling requirements.

- Electronic equipment donations usually go to the people and organizations least equipped to pay for recycling of unusable equipment.
- Software licensing costs are prohibitive for most reuse opportunities.
- Repairing and upgrading systems requires time and specialized expertise.

Dismantling To facilitate resource extraction, contents need to be labeled.

- Where are the hazardous materials in electronic parts?

- The plethora of plastics used in the equipment is not labeled nor is it easily separated for resin recycling.
- Printers, scanners, keyboards, and mice are disposable materials due to the high cost of dismantling and repair and the extremely low value.

Landfill Bans As long as a free disposal option is available, equipment will not be reused, materials will not be recycled, and markets will not be developed for dismantling and high end use.

Notes to Other Subgroups

Regulation Subgroup Landfill bans for monitors in California and Massachusetts should be explored and the effects of those bans have on markets and disposals in border states.

Design Subgroup Our group expressed a lot of concern about the proliferation of multiple plastics in the equipment. There is also a problem with the manufacturing process adding difficulty to dismantling. Flat panel screens will bring a new material stream into e-waste.

Research/Tasks

Software licensing and options available for affordable hardware reuse need to be explored. Betty Patton will work with members of the group and others to research this.

Group Process

Future meetings:

- Oso will work with Betty Patton to design a listserv.
- The group is spread throughout 4 states, so email will be the primary method of communication.
- Homework assignments will be made shortly and we will regroup in 2 weeks.

Define other roles and assignments that will be needed.