



SCALING THE CIRCULAR  
ECONOMY SERIES

# SCALING THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR ELECTRONICS

Why Every Business  
Needs a Platform Strategy

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## Scaling the Circular Economy Series

This white paper series offers businesses practical guidance on scaling the circular economy for both environmental and economic benefit. Each paper will focus on actionable strategies, sector-specific challenges, and real-world examples to help organizations transition from linear to circular models, emphasizing resource efficiency, waste reduction, and new business opportunities.

The series begins with the electronics sector, exploring how companies can design products for durability, repairability, and recyclability, implement responsible e-waste management, and collaborate across the value chain to create new revenue streams through refurbishment and recycling.

Future papers will include a focus on key sectors, such as the oil & gas sector, clean energy, logistics, and the built environment, providing tailored recommendations for each industry. Topics will include the value of adopting circular platform strategies and maximizing reuse and material efficiency. By highlighting business benefits such as cost savings, risk reduction, compliance, and enhanced brand value, this series aims to equip leaders with the knowledge and tools needed to implement circular practices that drive sustainability, resilience, and profitability in a resource-constrained world.



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# Executive Summary

## The Problem

Enterprises refresh millions of laptops, servers, and other electronics crucial to their operations every quarter yet treat the off-ramp as a cost sink. Of the 62 million tons of e-waste generated globally each year, barely 25% is recycled. For the Forbes 2000 enterprise laptop fleet alone that is \$15–20 billion in unrealized resale value. The lost opportunity erodes EBITDA and magnifies compliance exposure as right-to-repair and EPR mandates tighten.

## The Insight

A single indicator—the circularity delta—makes that loss of value visible (method on p. 12). It measures the share of annual hardware spend that never returns as cash. Ad-hoc disposition typically recovers only 10–15% of spend, so 85–90% evaporates. Moving to purpose-built circular platforms can lift recovery toward 30+%, roughly doubling or tripling today's norm and cutting the delta to about 70%. Crossing the 15% line is a first proof of concept; pushing closer to 30% turns IT retirement from a cost center into a monetization engine.

## The Playbook

Improving asset recovery and circularity can be achieved through a three-phase approach: Pilot, Integrate, and Optimize. The four-month Pilot phase involves selecting a suitable business unit

or asset category, such as high-turnover IT equipment, to test and refine the process. During this phase, companies measure current recovery performance, set benchmarks, and document every step of the disposition process, including service-level agreements for data sanitization and logistics. The goal is to validate the process, identify the circularity delta (the gap between hardware spend and recovery value), and test how much of this gap can be reclaimed through resale, redeployment, or refurbishment.

Once the pilot proves viable, the 14-month Integrate phase begins, focusing on scaling systems across regions and asset classes. This stage requires internal alignment among IT, procurement, ESG, and finance, with standardized workflows and clear escalation paths. Companies must choose the most suitable platform model based on their needs, asset volume, and risk tolerance. Transparency in resale partners and the integration of value-added services like repair, refurbishment, and buyback programs are essential. In the final Optimize phase, after at least 18 months, companies embed circular processes and leverage them for strategic advantage, using data to inform procurement, predict refresh cycles, and support customer-facing initiatives.



# Introduction

Electronics now sit at the core of business productivity, innovation, and competitive advantage. Enterprises, both large and small, use a wide range of electronic devices. However, the proliferation of electronic devices has a downside. The constant cycle of IT asset refresh and disposal has led to a global rise in electronic waste (e-waste), with about 62 million tons generated annually.<sup>1</sup> Less than a quarter of this waste is recycled properly. This e-waste harms the environment through toxic leaks and resource depletion. It also puts businesses at risk of regulatory action and reputational damage.

Traditional models, where electronics are made, used, and thrown away, are unsustainable. Companies must rethink how they create, capture, and preserve value throughout the electronics lifecycle. The circular economy offers a solution. By focusing on reuse, refurbishment, responsible recycling, and net recovery (of valuable materials, but also financial), organizations can extend IT asset life, lessen environmental impact, and create new economic and social value.

Digital platforms can play a key role in this shift.<sup>2</sup> They connect buyers and sellers of used, refurbished, or recycled electronics. These platforms simplify the transfer, refurbishment, and resale of IT equipment. This helps businesses maximize asset value, manage data securely, and meet new sustainability requirements. By bringing together supply and demand, facilitating secure

transactions, and offering services like repair and warranties, these platforms encourage circular practices and market growth. Circular platforms are no longer just back-office tools for IT asset recovery—they are becoming strategic infrastructure for modern enterprise resilience. As electronics lifecycles accelerate and regulatory pressures mount, digital platforms provide the only scalable way to manage asset traceability, enable secure resale, automate compliance, and unlock ESG-driven value in a profitable way.

This white paper presents a strategic framework for leveraging circular platforms to reduce e-waste, recover economic value, and future-proof operations. We explore real-world platform models, evaluate their tradeoffs, and offer actionable recommendations to help companies turn electronic assets from a liability into a competitive advantage.

The goal is clear: empower every business to lead in scaling the circular economy for electronics. This will yield financial, environmental, and social benefits beyond traditional asset disposal. We review different models for leveraging digital platforms and provide recommendations for how companies can capture greater value from electronic assets by leveraging smart platform strategies.

# IT Asset Refresh and Disposition

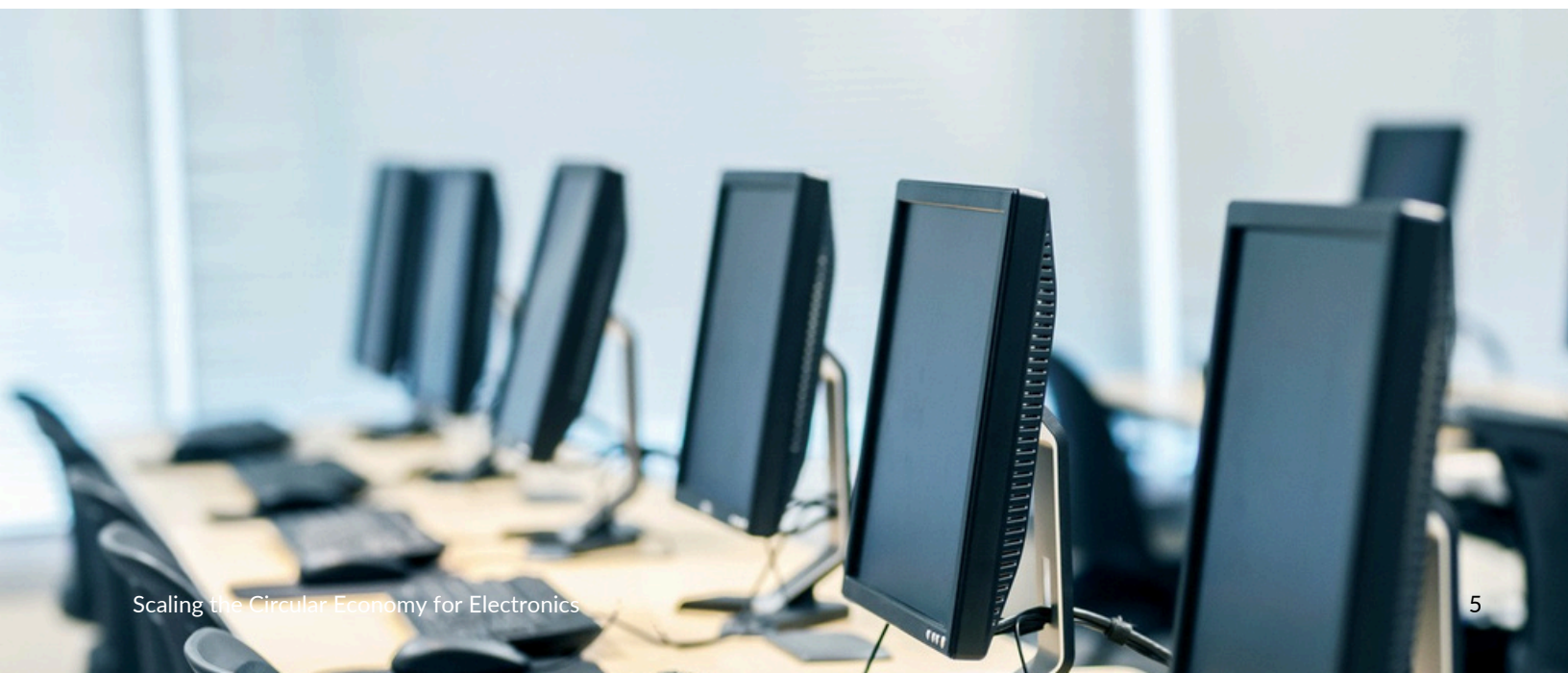
As electronics have grown in use, a variety of companies have become involved in IT asset refresh and disposition. This group includes IT asset disposition (ITAD) providers, technology lifecycle management firms, logistics experts, and data security specialists. They help in securely decommissioning, transporting, sanitizing, remarketing, and recycling IT equipment as businesses adopt new technologies.

This paper focuses on how circular platforms can further enhance IT asset value. By using circular business models like refurbishment, resale, and reuse, companies can achieve financial, environmental, and social benefits beyond traditional asset disposal.

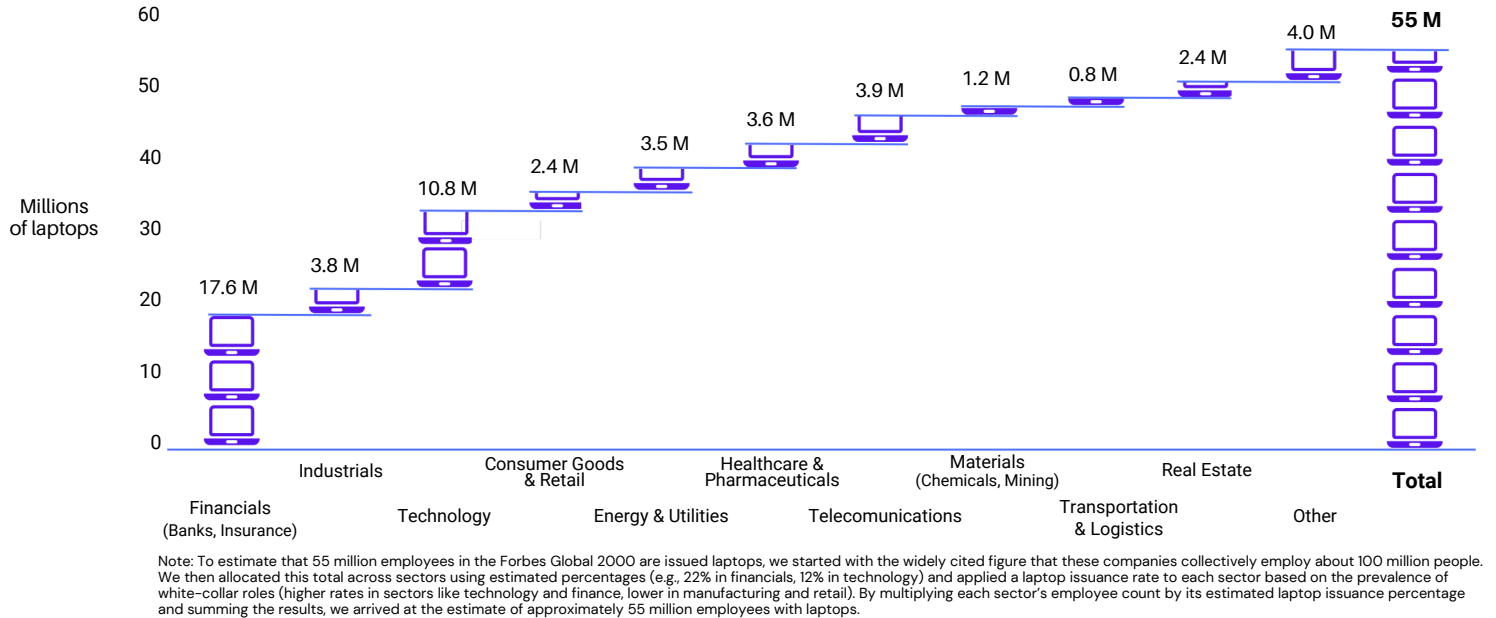
IT assets are crucial for how modern businesses create value. They underpin digital operations, innovation, and competitive advantage. Assets like laptops, servers, and networking equipment

boost productivity, streamline processes, enhance decision-making, and support new products and services. Technology integration drives growth, cuts costs, and fuels innovation - core levers in today's digital economy.

We can gain perspective on the volume of electronics used in companies today by examining the usage of laptops at the companies making up the Forbes 2000.<sup>3</sup> These companies have approximately 100 million employees, and sector analysis suggests that about 55 million of them are issued laptops—primarily in white-collar sectors such as technology, finance, and telecommunication (See Figure 1). The average laptop weighs around 1.6 kg and is composed of metals, plastics, glass, and specialized compounds, with magnesium, glass, and polycarbonate among the most significant materials by mass.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 1. Laptop Deployment at the Forbes Global 2000 Enterprises by Sector**



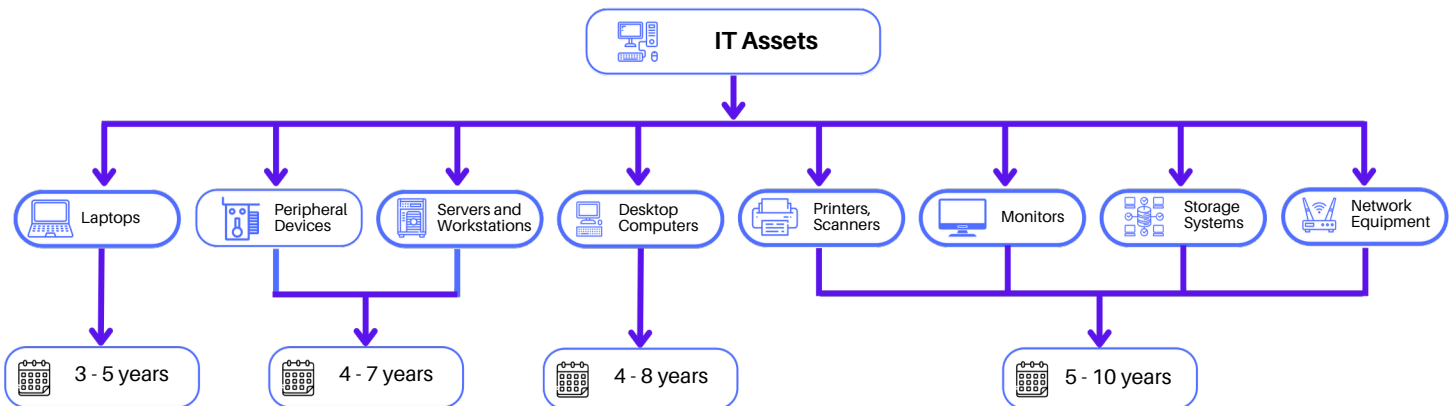
The average laptop is a highly engineered device, with magnesium, glass, plastics, aluminum, copper, and iron making up the majority of its mass, while a wide range of other elements and compounds contribute to its function and performance. In terms of metals laptops typically contain magnesium, aluminum, copper, iron, steel and for the battery lithium, cobalt and graphite. Different ores have different concentrations of metals. To produce the lithium cobalt oxide and graphite for a single laptop battery, you need to mine approximately 12–20 kg of cobalt ore, 0.1–0.2 kg of lithium ore, and 0.15–0.3 kg of graphite ore.<sup>5</sup> The amount of cobalt ore required is by far the largest, owing to its low concentration in ore deposits.

Consequently, the material demand to supply 55 million laptops is substantial. To supply lithium, cobalt, and graphite for batteries in 55 million

laptops, you would need to mine approximately 1.1 million metric tons of cobalt ore, 9,900 metric tons of lithium ore, and 16,500 metric tons of graphite ore. The total estimated amount of ore required for the other main metals in a laptop is substantial. Specifically, approximately 207,900 metric tons of magnesium ore, 39,050 metric tons of aluminum ore, 75,900 metric tons of copper ore, 51,150 metric tons of iron ore, and 36,850 metric tons of steel-related ore must be mined.

If we project forward to a full decade, the total ore demand – assuming three refresh cycles – increases to 4.6 million metric tons of various ores. While only capturing the impact of laptops, these figures underscore the environmental and logistical consequences of maintaining up-to-date technology devices across the world's largest 2,000 enterprises.

**Figure 2. Typical Enterprise IT Asset Refresh Cycles**



Laptops are just one type of electronics used by companies. Many other electronic devices are also deployed such as servers, workstations, printers, scanners, storage systems and network equipment. As illustrated in Figure 2, different IT assets have different refresh cycles, with some having replacement cycles of 3 to 5 years and others 4 to 7 years. Some longer-lived electronics can last up to 10 years. As technology evolves, older assets often fail to support the latest software or security needs. This requires ongoing replenishment to maintain performance and value.

Large enterprises vary significantly in how much value they recover from obsolete electronic devices, with several key factors determining these differences in recovery rates.<sup>6</sup> Strong asset management practices form the foundation of effective value recovery. This includes detailed tracking systems and systematic testing protocols for retired equipment, which enable organizations to identify devices suitable for reuse or resale. Companies that tap reliable networks of buyers, refurbishers, and recyclers can enhance recovery rates. Organizations that embrace circular

economy principles are better positioned to recover value throughout their devices' entire lifecycle, emphasizing extended product life, reuse, and responsible recycling. Conversely, organizations with weaker circularity measures often resort to device destruction to mitigate risk, significantly reducing recoverable value.

In short, electronics that have reached the end of life for the first user can be a source of value, if collected, refurbished and resold to a second user. If we consider that the residual value of a laptop after three to five years is typically 30% of its original price, or approximately \$250 to \$300 per unit, the total residual value of the 55 million laptops used by Forbes 2000 companies would range from \$13.75 billion to \$16.5 billion.<sup>7</sup>

This calculation is based on multiplying the number of laptops by the lower and upper ends of the estimated residual value per device. However, if companies implement more effective monetization strategies that increase net recovery by 25%, the value recovered per laptop could rise by an additional \$60 to \$75, resulting in a new per-unit value of \$310 to \$375. Under this improved

scenario, the total value of the 55 million laptops would increase to between \$17.05 billion and \$20.625 billion. This means that by adopting better asset recovery and resale practices, the top 2,000 companies in the world could unlock an additional \$3.3 billion to \$4.125 billion in value just from their existing laptop inventories.<sup>8</sup>

Adopting circular strategies enables companies to significantly reduce their environmental impact by minimizing resource extraction, lowering emissions, and decreasing waste through reuse, recycling, and refurbishment. These approaches also open new revenue streams by recovering value from used assets, such as through resale, refurbishing, or service-based models, which enhance profitability and reduce reliance on volatile raw material markets. Additionally,

“ Adopting circular strategies enables companies to significantly reduce their environmental impact by minimizing resource extraction, lowering emissions, and decreasing waste through reuse, recycling, and refurbishment.

donating unused but functional assets to charities not only diverts waste and supports social causes but also provides tax benefits and strengthens corporate reputation. Overall, circular strategies create a synergistic blend of environmental sustainability, financial gain, and social responsibility, making them a compelling and holistic approach for modern businesses.

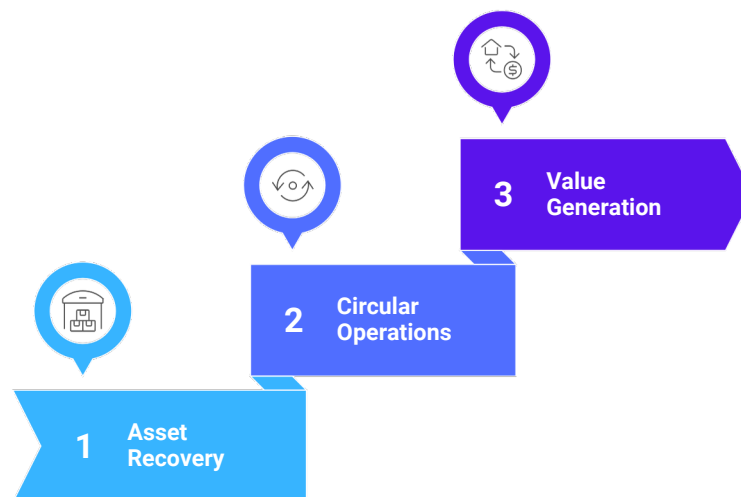


# Fundamentals of Reverse Logistics

Maximizing the value of assets that have been used requires implementing an effective circular logistics program.<sup>9</sup> Reverse logistics is a system that involves three core steps as shown in Figure 3. The process begins with asset recovery, which involves retrieving assets from various sources such as customers, retailers, or warehouses. Throughout this stage, it is essential to maintain accurate records of each recovered asset, documenting its history, current condition, and final disposition. Once assets are recovered, circular operations come into play. This involves sorting the assets based on their functional and cosmetic conditions to determine the most appropriate next steps. Assets that can be restored undergo repair and refurbishment processes to enhance their value and extend their usability.

The ultimate goal of circular logistics is value generation, which is achieved by prioritizing reuse over recycling whenever possible. Making informed disposition decisions ensures that each asset is handled in a way that maximizes its value, whether that means reusing, refurbishing, or recycling it. Additionally, leveraging circular marketplaces allows organizations to resell refurbished or reused assets, further increasing their resale value and reducing waste. In summary, circular logistics focuses on efficiently managing the flow of assets to keep them in use for as long as possible, thereby generating value and minimizing environmental impact.

**Figure 3. Fundamental Steps to Achieving Reverse Logistics Success**



Companies seeking circular solutions face several challenges. The electronics industry lacks providers that offer integrated, full-service circularity solutions. Unlike Cox Automotive in the automotive sector, companies must work with many different vendors to manage the entire lifecycle, from take-back and repair to data wiping, resale, and recycling.<sup>10</sup> This leads to inefficiencies, higher costs, and operational complexity.

Electronic device design can also pose issues. Unlike cars, which have standardized components and established resale and recycling channels, electronics have rapid innovation and frequent design changes, making repair, refurbishment, and recycling more difficult and less economically attractive. Many devices are not designed for easy disassembly or material recovery, making it harder to extend product lifespans or recover value at end-of-life.

Data security is another significant concern. Ensuring secure and certified data wiping is essential for many electronics, especially IT assets. However, when data wiping is handled by a separate provider from those managing take-back, repair, or resale, the risk of data breaches or non-compliance with privacy regulations increases, exposing companies to reputational and legal risks.

Dispersed remote work creates several challenges for large companies trying to keep track of and collect electronic devices. The main issues stem from the sheer geographic spread, which complicates logistics such as shipping and tracking equipment across multiple locations. This becomes even more complex when dealing with

international employees, as customs regulations and shipping delays can further hinder efficient device collection. Additionally, remote work environments often result in a mix of company-issued and personal devices being used, making it difficult for IT teams to maintain consistent tracking and retrieval processes.

Uneven regulations add further challenges. Companies must navigate a patchwork of regulations governing e-waste, data privacy, and environmental compliance, which vary by region and product type. Managing compliance across multiple vendors and jurisdictions increases administrative burden and risk, especially for large enterprises operating in multiple countries. In addition, the electronics industry lacks widely adopted tools and standards for assessing product recyclability, reusability, and overall circularity.<sup>11</sup> This makes it difficult for companies to evaluate and improve their practices or compare different service providers.

Despite these considerable challenges, companies committed to circularity in IT asset management have opportunities for innovation and value creation. By investing in circular logistics and engaging with the right service partners and circular platforms, companies can streamline the management of IT asset lifecycles, reduce costs, and unlock new revenue streams from refurbishment, resale, and responsible material recycling.

# The Circularity Delta

Most companies do not deliberately underperform at IT asset recovery, but many treat it as an afterthought. Devices are handed off to legacy vendors, resold sporadically, or routed to basic recycling programs. The result is a patchwork process with limited oversight and significant value left on the table.

That's where the circularity delta comes in. It quantifies how much value your IT retirement process is failing to recover and helps companies diagnose whether their systems are delivering the full financial and strategic upside of circularity.

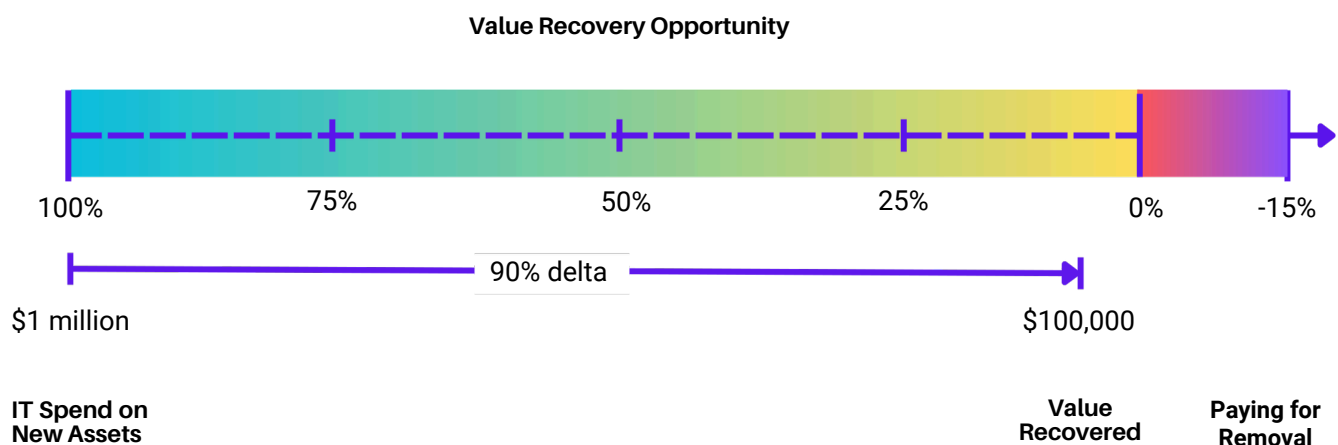
## What is the Circularity Delta?

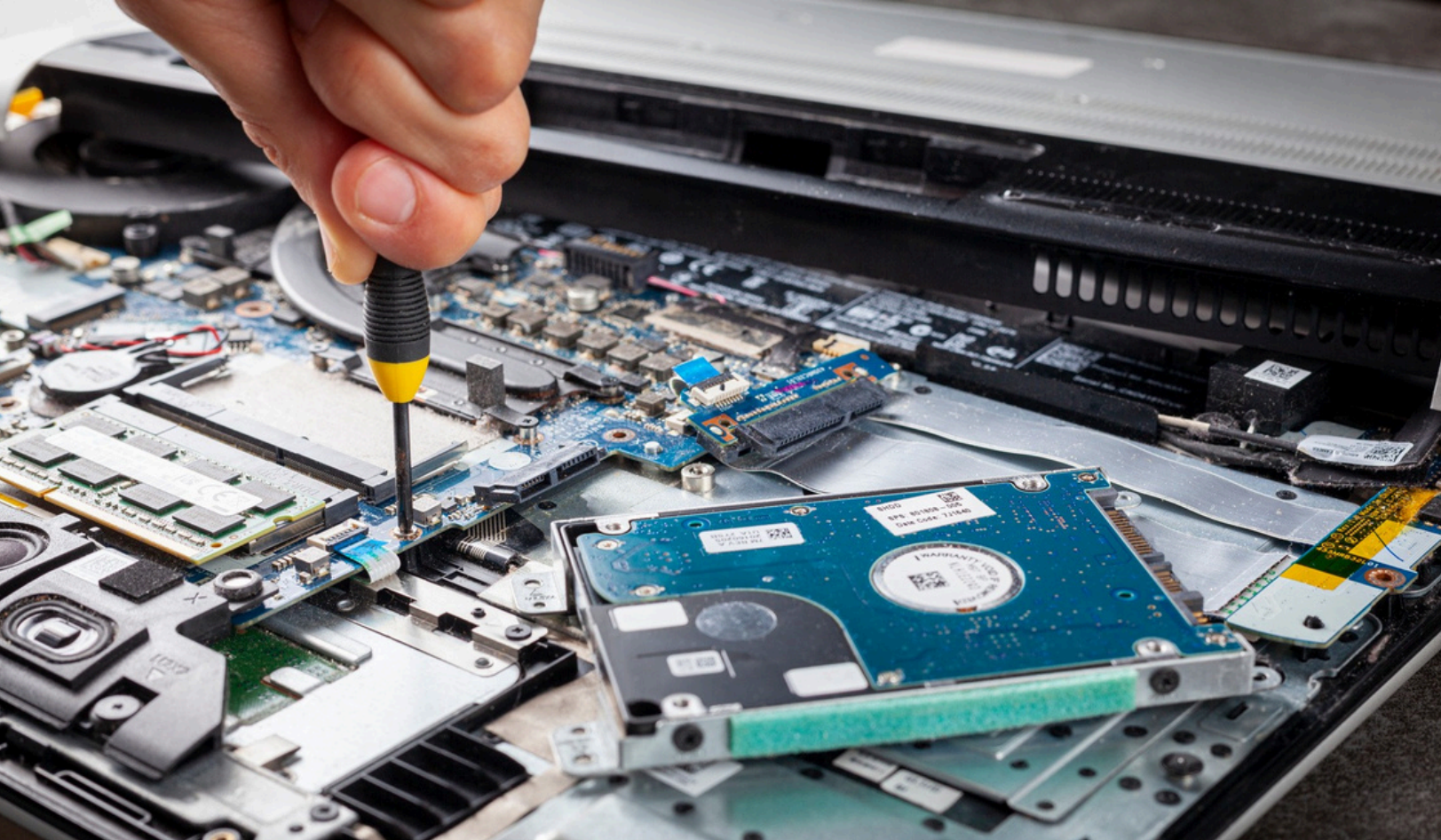
Expressed as a percentage, this metric captures the gap between what your company pays for electronic assets and what you recover when retiring them.

$$\text{Circularity Delta} = (\text{Annual Hardware Spend} - \text{Net Recovery Value}) \div \text{Annual Hardware Spend}$$

For example, if you spend \$1 million per year on devices and recover only \$100,000 at end-of-life, your circularity delta is 90%. This is illustrated in figure 4.

Figure 4. Example of Applying the Circularity Delta





For example, if your company spends \$1 million per year on devices, as indicated in Figure 4 but recover only \$100,000 at end-of-life, your circularity delta is 90%. Note that it is possible to have a circularity score of over 100%. This would signal that your company is spending more to have IT assets removed than is being recovered from the residual value of those assets.

A high circularity delta is a strong signal that there is value that isn't being realized. It means you're still operating in the first two steps of circular logistics and have not yet optimized the third step, which is value generation. This is where the platform strategy comes into play. It is often in the delta—between sunk cost and recovered value—where circular platforms unlock their key value.

“Most organizations don't deliberately underperform at IT asset recovery—they simply treat it as an afterthought. Devices are handed off to legacy vendors, resold sporadically, or routed to basic recycling programs. The result is a patchwork process with limited oversight—and significant value left on the table.

# Platforms Are Value Generators

What closes the delta isn't just better resale—it's an overall system and strategy. Circular platforms enable repeatable triage, refurbishment, resale, redeployment, and compliance. They convert ad-hoc recovery into a predictable monetization engine. Recent benchmarks show that ad-hoc recovery efforts (e.g. passive sell-off or one-size-fits-all ITAD vendors) typically yield only 10–15% of original hardware spend.<sup>12</sup> By contrast, companies that deploy purpose-built resale or recommerce platforms often double or triple their returns. Cascade Asset Management reports that organizations using structured resale processes gained 30%+ recovery improvements after switching to digital resale platforms. In short, a high circularity delta isn't a failure—it's a business case and call to action.

What's at stake isn't just a few percentage points of IT recovery value. A high circularity delta points to a deeper systems gap—one where assets quietly lose value, data risk grows unchecked, and sustainability goals fall short without anyone

noticing. Unmonetized inventory may sit idle in storage for months. Devices that could have been triaged, refurbished, or donated are prematurely recycled or discarded. Chain-of-custody documentation weakens, and with it, your ability to prove secure data erasure or responsible handling.

There's also a missed opportunity to strengthen your ESG posture. Stakeholders increasingly expect companies to show—not just state—how they close the loop on critical materials, reduce e-waste, and extend asset lifespans. Circular platforms offer more than financial recovery—they deliver the transparency and traceability that new ESG reporting frameworks increasingly require. As regulations tighten around reuse, emissions tracking, and product-level circularity, closing your circularity delta becomes not just a financial imperative—but a compliance one. In this light, the circularity delta is not a KPI to report. It's a wake-up call to build better systems.



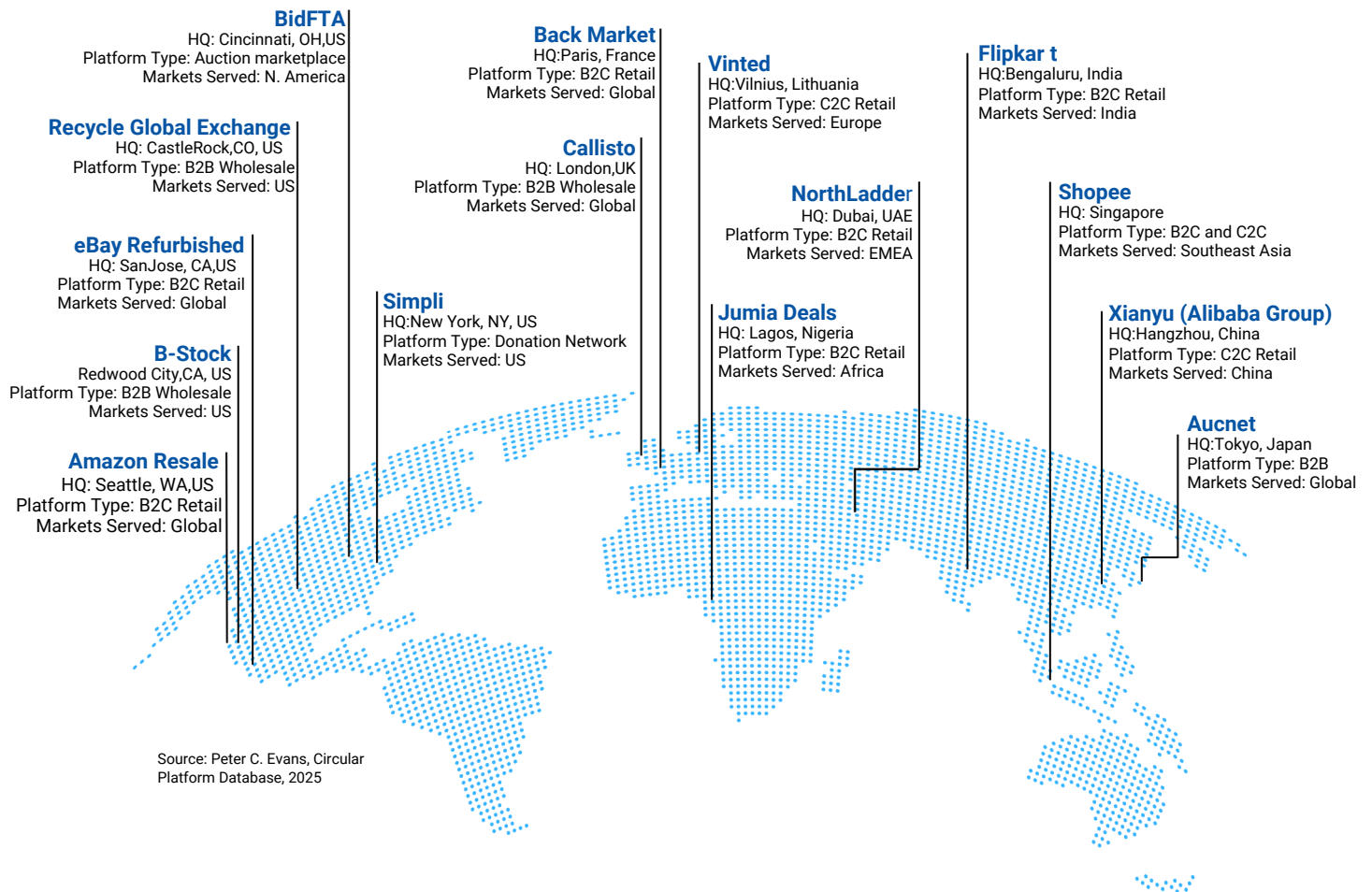
## The circularity delta heuristic: How to read the signals

We propose a simple rule of thumb:

If your circularity delta is greater than ~85%, your system is leaving money on the table. It's time to act, and a system upgrade could pay off.

If it's less than 85%, there may still be improvement opportunities but you are well on your way. Start considering whether to keep your IT equipment longer.

**Figure 5. Examples of B2B, B2C and C2C Recommerce Platforms for Electronics**



We have established that circularity involves maximizing the value of assets and a metric for this is keeping the circularity delta low. The next question is how this can be accomplished. This is where circular platforms come into the picture. Figure 5 provides examples of platforms that support the resale of electronics. These platforms can be grouped by platform type and the geographic markets they serve. Business-to-business (B2B) platforms like Aucnet, BidFTA, Callisto, and Recycle Global Exchange (RGX) focus on facilitating wholesale transactions between businesses seeking to tap a network of end-of-life electronic solution providers. B-Stock also operates in the wholesale space but primarily serves the United States.

Business-to-consumer (B2C) retail platforms such as Amazon Resale, Back Market, eBay Refurbished, and Flipkart cater directly to consumers, with Amazon, Back Market, and eBay Refurbished serving more global markets, while Flipkart targets India. NorthLadder is a B2C platform focused on the Middle East and North Africa, while Jumia Deals serves Africa. Vinted is a consumer-to-consumer (C2C) platform for peer-to-peer sales, mainly serving Europe. Shopee operates as both B2C and C2C, enabling both businesses and individual consumers to buy and sell electronics across Southeast Asia. Simpli is a platform based in the United States that focuses on donations, connecting companies with unwanted assets with a network of charities.

This diversity in platform types—ranging from B2B wholesale to B2C retail, C2C and mission driven platforms—reflects a broad approach to serving electronics resale markets across different global regions. These platforms play a central role in generating value from used electronics and supporting greater circularity. The core function they provide is connect sellers with buyers used, refurbished, recycled, or remanufactured electronics. These platforms simplify the process, allowing first customers to easily transfer their electronic items to second customers. This helps extend product life through reuse or recover valuable materials through recycling. A more detailed description of each of these platforms can be found in the Appendix of this paper.

Recommerce platforms offer several important services. They list and categorize available electronics, providing detailed product information, quality grades, and compatibility data. This supports smarter purchasing decisions. With integrated logistics and payment systems, platforms ensure secure transactions and manage the transfer of goods. Many also offer value-added services like device authentication, repair, refurbishment, and warranty programs. These services build trust among buyers and sellers.

By bringing together supply and demand, these platforms address the fragmentation of the used electronics market. This makes it easier for individuals and businesses to find and exchange products. This aggregation supports economies of scale in refurbishment and recycling, lowering costs and environmental impact. Platforms often have take-back or buyback programs, allowing consumers to return end-of-life devices for responsible recycling or resale. This ensures that valuable materials are recovered and reintroduced into manufacturing.

TAD companies and other organizations involved in processing used electronics utilize recommerce platforms as key channels for reselling these assets. These platforms enable ITAD providers to list detailed product information, quality ratings, and compatibility data, attracting appropriate buyers and securing better resale value, while also offering integrated logistics, secure payment systems, and value-added services such as device authentication, refurbishment, and warranty options.

Today's recommerce platforms for electronics offer an expansive range of services and global reach, enabling companies to effectively transition toward circularity by connecting buyers and sellers across B2B, B2C, C2C, and mission-driven models in nearly every major market. These platforms not only streamline the resale, refurbishment, and recycling of used electronics through integrated logistics, payment systems, and value-added services, but also address market fragmentation, support economies of scale, and ensure responsible asset management. As a result, it is now easier recover value from used devices, extend product lifecycles, and reduce environmental impact, making circular solutions more accessible and impactful than ever before.



## 5 Strategic Options to Engage Platforms

The rapid growth of platforms for retail and wholesale trading in electronics brings both challenges and opportunities for organizations. There are now at least 60 platforms providing resale options.<sup>13</sup> This gives companies a wide range of choices, each with unique features and business models. While this variety helps organizations find solutions that fit their needs, it also adds complexity to platform evaluation and integration.

Choosing the right platform requires careful thought about several key factors. First, alignment with your organization's R Strategy—reduce, reuse, refurbish, repair, remanufacture, and recycle—is crucial. The platform should support these goals by allowing effective asset tracking and lifecycle management. It must also help maximize residual value through resale or repurposing. Technology maturity and innovation are important too; platforms should offer capabilities like real-time analytics and automation to future-proof your operations.

Security, data privacy, and compliance are top priorities, especially due to the sensitive nature of data on electronic assets and growing regulatory demands. Platforms must have strong security protocols for data erasure, detailed audit trails, and compliance with international standards. Integration is key as well; the platform should connect easily with existing systems and tools to avoid operational silos and enhance efficiency.

Scalability and global reach are essential for organizations with international operations or growth ambitions. The platform needs to manage increasing transaction volumes and support multi-region operations without losing performance or compliance. User experience and support are also critical; intuitive interfaces, thorough training resources, and responsive customer service are vital for successful adoption.

With the platform landscape mapped and decision criteria in mind, the next step is selecting the right strategic approach. Evaluating these complex factors systematically is essential.

Figure 6 presents five different ways organizations can engage with circular electronics platforms. There's no one-size-fits-all approach—your strategy should align with your asset mix, operational complexity, and internal capabilities.

In many cases, the best approach isn't picking just one model. It may be more effective to combine two or more. For example, outsourcing low-value gear while white-labeling a resale portal for high-turnover devices. It may also make sense to engage platforms that specialize in donations for the combination of social and tax benefits that this can achieve. Use this framework to match your business goals—speed, control, ESG impact—with the right platform strategy or mix.

## 1

## Build, Own, and Operate Platform

The Build, Own, and Operate Platform model has a company developing and managing its own digital system for circular electronics management. This model provides maximum control and customization. Microsoft's Circularity Hub is a prime example. By creating its own platform, Microsoft tailors the system to fit its operations. It integrates deeply with supply chain management, asset tracking, and compliance processes. The Circular Centers use technologies like the Intelligent Disposition and Routing System (IDARS) and Microsoft Dynamics 365. These tools help plan each component's next life, whether through reuse, resale, or recycling. This ensures precise asset tracking and supports sustainability goals, like extending server lifespans and achieving 90% reuse of retired hardware. The platform allows Microsoft to sort and process decommissioned servers and hardware, directing them to their best next use. Components are tested and refurbished for internal reuse, resale, or donation to educational programs. For instance, memory cards from retired servers can be used in electronic toys, while other equipment helps schools with skills training. The system also manages packaging waste, working with suppliers to recycle or redesign packaging, diverting thousands of tons from landfills.

**Best suited for:** Large enterprises with high asset volumes, internal engineering capabilities, and sustainability mandates. **Trade-off:** High upfront investment and resource commitment.

Figure 6. Recommerce Platform Models

|   | Platform Options              | Example                         | Key Benefits                                                                                                           | Key Trade-offs                                                                 |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Build, Own, Operate Platform  | Microsoft Circularity Hub       | Full control, deep integration, custom features, tailored to internal processes                                        | Higher cost, resource-intensive, requires internal team to manage and maintain |
| 2 | White Label Platform Software | Verizon-branded resale platform | Fast deployment, branded experience, lower upfront investment, leverages proven technology                             | Vendor dependency, limited customization compared to fully custom solutions    |
| 3 | Outsource Platform Resale     | Sims Lifecycle Services         | Maximum value recovery, refurbishment, redeployment, responsible recycling, global compliance, secure data destruction | More complex vendor management, dependency on provider                         |
| 4 | Managed Service Platform      | Recycle Global Exchange         | Access an ecosystem of service providers; match supply with the right capabilities and geograph location               | Lower value recovery potential, less flexibility in asset disposition          |
| 5 | Mission-Driven Platform       | GSMA Marketplace, Simpli        | Meet public sustainability goals and standards; generate tax savings, automated reporting                              | Limited choices of providers; most useful for a portion of disposition not all |

## 2 White Label Existing Platform Technology

White labeling existing platform technology allows companies to quickly enter the circular electronics market by licensing proven software and rebranding it. This model enables faster deployment by skipping the long build phase and leveraging proven tech. It also lowers the resource burden, as the platform provider manages the technical infrastructure, security, and compliance. This allows the licensee to focus on branding and customer experience. Verizon's device trade-in program illustrates this model. It lets customers resell used smartphones for credit toward new purchases. While the exact platform behind Verizon's service isn't publicly detailed, it aligns with a white-labeled technology approach. Customers use a Verizon-branded trade-in portal to enter device information, get an instant valuation, and complete the transaction. Behind the scenes, logistics, device grading, and payment processing are likely managed by a specialized platform provider. White labeling lets companies like Verizon enter the device resale market efficiently, with minimal technical overhead. By licensing existing platforms, they can deliver a seamless trade-in experience without developing proprietary technology.

**Best suited for:** Companies prioritizing speed, brand control, and customer experience over deep customization. **Trade-off:** Limited control over roadmap; vendor dependency.

## 3 Outsource Platform Resale

This model provides a streamlined approach to ITAD and electronics resale. It suits organizations seeking simplicity and minimal internal management. Companies partner with a third-party provider that resells used electronics through a single channel, like an auction portal. RGX is a notable example, evolving e-waste management by moving away from traditional RFP processes. Instead of vetting individual ITAD vendors, RGX aggregates hundreds onto one platform. This creates a marketplace where organizations can list their retired IT assets and receive competitive bids. The RGX platform allows organizations to upload details of surplus electronics, after which vetted ITADs and recyclers bid on the assets. RGX manages logistics, documentation, and compliance, ensuring secure data destruction and responsible processing. This centralized process reduces administrative work and speeds up value recovery. Benefits of this model include operational efficiency, transparency, and assured compliance with industry standards. This model suits organizations with straightforward needs, lower asset volumes, or those prioritizing ease of use over maximizing resale value.

**Best suited for:** Mid-sized orgs seeking simplicity, low internal complexity, and fast time-to-value. **Trade-off:** Lower resale optimization and platform differentiation.

## 4

**Outsource/Partner: Multichannel Resale**

In the multichannel resale model, companies work with providers like Sims Lifecycle Services (SLS) to maximize value recovery and sustainability from retired IT assets. SLS employs a comprehensive approach that includes refurbishment and redeployment. Assets are repaired, upgraded, and either reused within the client's organization or prepared for external resale. High-demand items are sold directly through established retail recommerce channels, like online marketplaces. For larger volumes, SLS facilitates bulk sales to brokers, ensuring clearance of assets.

When reuse isn't feasible, SLS responsibly recycles non-reusable items, processing them in line with strict environmental standards to recover valuable materials and minimize waste. This multichannel approach leverages various resale platforms and strategies to maximize each asset's financial and environmental value. However, it also introduces greater complexity, requiring more sophisticated integrations and vendor management.

**Best suited for:** Enterprises with diverse assets and aggressive value recovery goals. Trade-off: Higher vendor management and integration complexity.

## 5

**Engage Sector-Wide or Mission-Driven Platforms**

Some organizations choose to participate in industry-led, government-supported circular platforms, and mission-driven platforms, especially when aligned with public goals, compliance, or standards-setting is key. These platforms typically focus on shared infrastructure, regulatory compliance, or ecosystem collaboration rather than commercial differentiation. For example, European public sector IT recovery platforms enable municipalities and educational institutions to comply with e-waste mandates while supporting broader reuse goals. Similar efforts exist in North America via nonprofit alliances or ESG-led coalitions focused on responsible tech recovery and redistribution. GSMA, representing the global mobile ecosystem, has also launched a circular platform for the telecommunications industry's electronic waste. This initiative brings aims to support shared industry targets, such as achieving a 20% device take-back rate by 2030, and leverages digital platforms to track and optimize resource flows, supporting reuse. Another approach is to engage in platforms that specialize in donations. Simpli is a platform that helps companies turn excess inventory into cost savings and donations to nonprofit organizations. It provides a simple solution to manage and donate excess inventory, while earning tax savings by deducting up to 2x the cost basis. The platform automates compliance and documentation, and provides real-time visibility to track donations.

**Best suited for:** Cross-industry initiatives and social corporate responsibility objectives that benefit from shared platform infrastructure.

# Challenges and Strategic Tradeoffs

Developing a circular electronics strategy isn't just about vision—it's about execution under pressure. Too often, pilot programs falter due to siloed ownership, low visibility into risks, or lack of operational controls. Figure 7 outlines common risks associated with circular electronics initiatives and how to mitigate them. Use this chart as a checklist before scaling any platform-based initiative, especially if your current approach relies heavily on legacy ITAD vendors or siloed internal processes.

## Data Security

When companies manage electronic asset disposition, the data associated with those assets

can be compromised if the process is not handled properly. Data breaches can be extremely costly, both in terms of direct expenses and long-term financial consequences.<sup>14</sup> Beyond financial and legal consequences, reputational damage is another major concern. News of a data breach from improper disposal can spread quickly, eroding customer trust, attracting negative media coverage, and making it difficult to retain or attract new business partners.

To mitigate these risks, companies should implement secure IT asset disposition programs that include formal procedures for tracking, sanitizing, and destroying data-bearing devices.

**Figure 7. Managing Circular Electronics Program Risks**

| Risk                           | What Can Go Wrong                                                                                 | Mitigation Strategies                                                                                                                           | Accountable Owner                    |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Data Security                  | Data breach, regulatory fines, reputational damage                                                | use certified ITAD providers ; maintain a signed chain-of-custody record; conduct regular audits                                                | Chief Information Security Officer   |
| Unrealized Value               | Lower recovery proceeds                                                                           | Run competitive bids on resale marketplaces; keep your own price-history dashboard; include a 12-month performance-based exit clause            | Procurement / Finance                |
| Process Inefficiency           | Enterprises with large quantities and high variation in IT asset types                            | Standardize and automate asset management, maintain comprehensive audit logs, centralize data, and assign clear accountability for IT assets    | Enterprise IT / Data-Governance lead |
| Reverse Logistics Cost         | Freight and handling charges consume resale margin                                                | Consolidate pickups, track logistics costs per asset, adopt process automation, use platforms that better match jobs with local service vendors | Supply-Chain / Facilities Management |
| Misaligned Internal Incentives | Business units choose the cheapest disposal option; sustainability and value recovery goals stall | Unify IT asset management and value recovery policies, and educate all teams on platform strategies to maximize value and drive decisions.      | C-Suite                              |

Detailed records of asset disposition activities—including proof of data destruction and responsible recycling—are crucial for demonstrating compliance and can serve as a defense in case of legal action. When engaging with resale platforms, companies must ensure that all data is completely sanitized before any transfer occurs. It's essential to vet marketplaces for strong security practices and regulatory compliance, and to require proof of data sanitization and proper handling. Maintaining transparency and comprehensive documentation throughout the process helps protect the company's interests and supports audit and compliance requirements.

### **Unrealized Value**

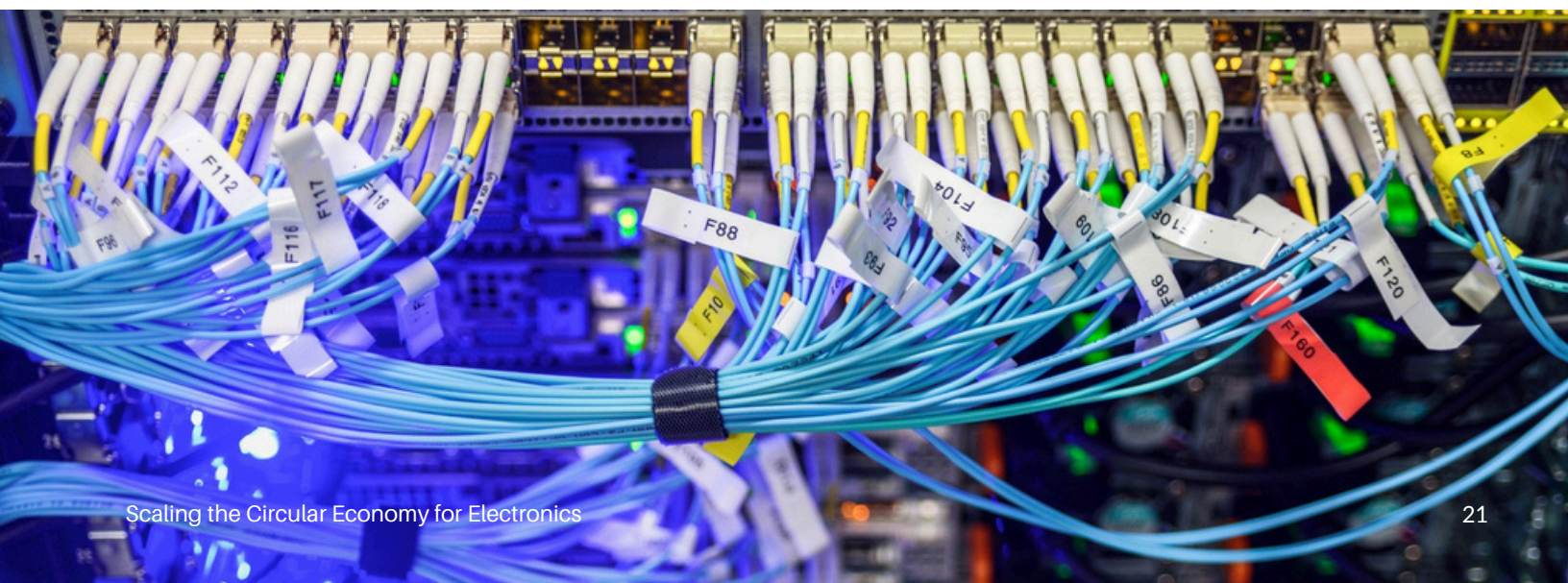
Even after reaching “end-of-life” in one application, IT assets often retain residual value that can be captured through refurbishment and remarketing.<sup>15</sup> If the company lacks an effective asset management plan or relies on third-party partners, it may receive low returns or even pay for assets to be removed that could have been sold for profit. Some vendors rely on their own sales networks rather than leveraging a broader range of resale marketplaces where demand

might be higher and prices more competitive. As a result, the company contracting them may receive less than the full market value for its assets, and the true revenue potential of its retired IT equipment may go unrealized.

To manage this risk, companies should take a proactive approach by implementing a full assessment of the circularity gap described above and steps needed to close it. This should include conducting a benchmark of what recovery is currently being achieved against what could be realistically achieved. As part of this process, companies should evaluate the different platform engagement options and how they can be best leveraged. Additionally, companies should set clear targets for asset recovery. Proactive management and a comprehensive assessment of the circularity gap are essential for companies to close the gap between current and potential asset recovery, ensuring they capture the full unrealized value of retired IT assets.

### **Process Inefficiencies**

Managing the disposition of IT assets involves several potential risks that can negatively affect



an organization's efficiency, compliance, and cost structure. One issue is duplicate data entry, which occurs when the same IT asset is recorded more than once due to manual data entry, automated discovery tools, or inconsistent naming conventions. This leads to confusion about the status of assets, inaccurate inventory counts, and possible mismanagement of their lifecycles.<sup>16</sup> Another issue is the loss of the audit trail, when records of asset transfers, disposals, or changes in ownership are incomplete or missing, organizations lose accountability, making it difficult to trace actions or comply with regulations. These problems can contribute to higher administrative costs, as extra effort is required to resolve duplicates, maintain accurate records, and manage outdated or non-performing assets.

To mitigate these risks, organizations should standardize asset naming, use a single source of truth for data, maintain comprehensive and secure audit logs, and automate and streamline disposition processes to ensure timely and accurate IT asset management. Addressing these challenges proactively helps organizations achieve more reliable, compliant, and cost-effective IT asset disposition.

### **Reverse Logistics Costs**

Reverse-logistics cost overruns can occur for several reasons, including unpredictable return volumes, high transportation and handling charges, labor-intensive processing and inspection, and increased storage or inventory holding costs.<sup>16</sup> When companies experience spikes in returns, especially during busy periods, their warehouses and staff may become overwhelmed, leading to higher operational

expenses. Transporting returned items back through the supply chain can be costly, particularly if goods are shipped over long distances or require multiple handling points, sometimes resulting in freight and handling charges that eat into resale margins. Additional costs arise from manual verification, sorting, and warehousing of returned products, as well as from process inefficiencies or unclear policies that may complicate handling and increase the risk of errors or fraud.

To protect resale margins, companies can implement several measures. Grouping multiple returns into single shipments can reduce per-unit freight costs and improve efficiency. Establishing regional processing hubs near major customer or retail sites minimizes transportation distances and speeds up the return-to-resale cycle. Tracking logistics costs per asset helps companies identify inefficiencies and make informed decisions about refurbishing, reselling, or scrapping returned items. Process automation and standardized returns policies can further reduce manual labor and errors, while optimized inventory management ensures that returned goods are quickly processed and resold or disposed of, keeping holding costs low and working capital available. Together, these strategies help companies control reverse-logistics expenses and maintain profitability despite the challenges posed by returns and handling.

### **Misaligned Internal Incentives**

Misalignment within organizations can undermine the effective management of IT asset disposition, as business units may independently opt for the cheapest disposal method without



recognizing the broader opportunities for value recovery.<sup>17</sup> This often results in missed chances to leverage platform strategies, such as digital exchanges or auction platforms, that can maximize returns from retired IT assets. To address this, organizations should centralize decision-making and establish a unified IT asset disposition policy, ensuring that all departments follow consistent guidelines focused on security, compliance, and value recovery. Equally important is raising educational awareness across the entire organization about the benefits and mechanics of platform strategies.

By providing ongoing training and clear communication, companies can empower all teams to understand how digital platforms can secure more competitive pricing and streamline the disposition process. Ultimately, fostering both alignment and educational awareness enables

“ Proactive management and a comprehensive assessment of the circularity gap are essential for companies to close the gap between current and potential asset recovery, ensuring they capture the full unrealized value of retired IT assets.

organizations to make more informed decisions, maximize the value of retired IT assets, and support overall business objectives. Robust programs bake these controls into the pilot phase, long before full rollout. With clear owners and measurable safeguards in place, the upside of platform-enabled recovery outweighs the downside risk—paving the way for the recommendations that follow.

# Technology and Regulatory Landscape

The landscape for managing electronic assets is far from static. Indeed, it is rapidly evolving. What once sat squarely in the back office of IT has become a board-level concern, driven by the convergence of two major forces: rapid technological innovation and tightening regulatory requirements. For large enterprises—particularly those within the Fortune Global 500—these shifts are not optional. They are fundamentally reshaping how companies manage, recover, and extract value from laptops, tablets, smartphones, and other digital infrastructure.

Technology is unlocking new capabilities for circularity at scale, while regulation is enforcing its adoption. Organizations that align early with these shifts can unlock operational efficiencies and competitive differentiation. Those that lag risk growing compliance exposure, system friction, and value leakage.

## Technology Innovation

Digital technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), automation, computer vision, digital product passports (DPPs), and blockchain are now making a real impact across the circular value chain.<sup>18</sup>

AI drives operational intelligence in reverse logistics. It enables smooth trade-in flows and improves grading and pricing engines. For example, Back Market uses AI to standardize quality checks for over 1,500 refurbishers. This

reduces fraud and boosts consistency. Foxway has reduced triage time with AI image analysis, achieving a much higher degree of accuracy.<sup>19</sup> AI can be used to transform how companies manage product lifecycles and reverse logistics. Tallgrass uses AI for provides tools for RMA (return merchandise authorization) monitoring, failure analysis, and digital passport solutions that track compliance and asset condition.<sup>20</sup> Each product or component is assigned a “BOM Passport,” which assesses its remaining value based on serial number, material composition, and historical usage data. This enables highly informed decisions about whether to repair, refurbish, resell, or recycle assets, maximizing recovery value and minimizing waste.

Computer vision is increasingly used to automate the grading and quality assessment of used goods, bringing consistency and scalability to circular transactions. For instance, the Pandas calls its computer vision tools and grading engine Pandas One+. This technology powers both their Web Grading App and in-store solutions, combining AI-driven image analysis for accurate and efficient smartphone grading. The Pandas One+ engine is responsible for real-time cosmetic grading, defect detection, and the overall automation of the trade-in evaluation process.

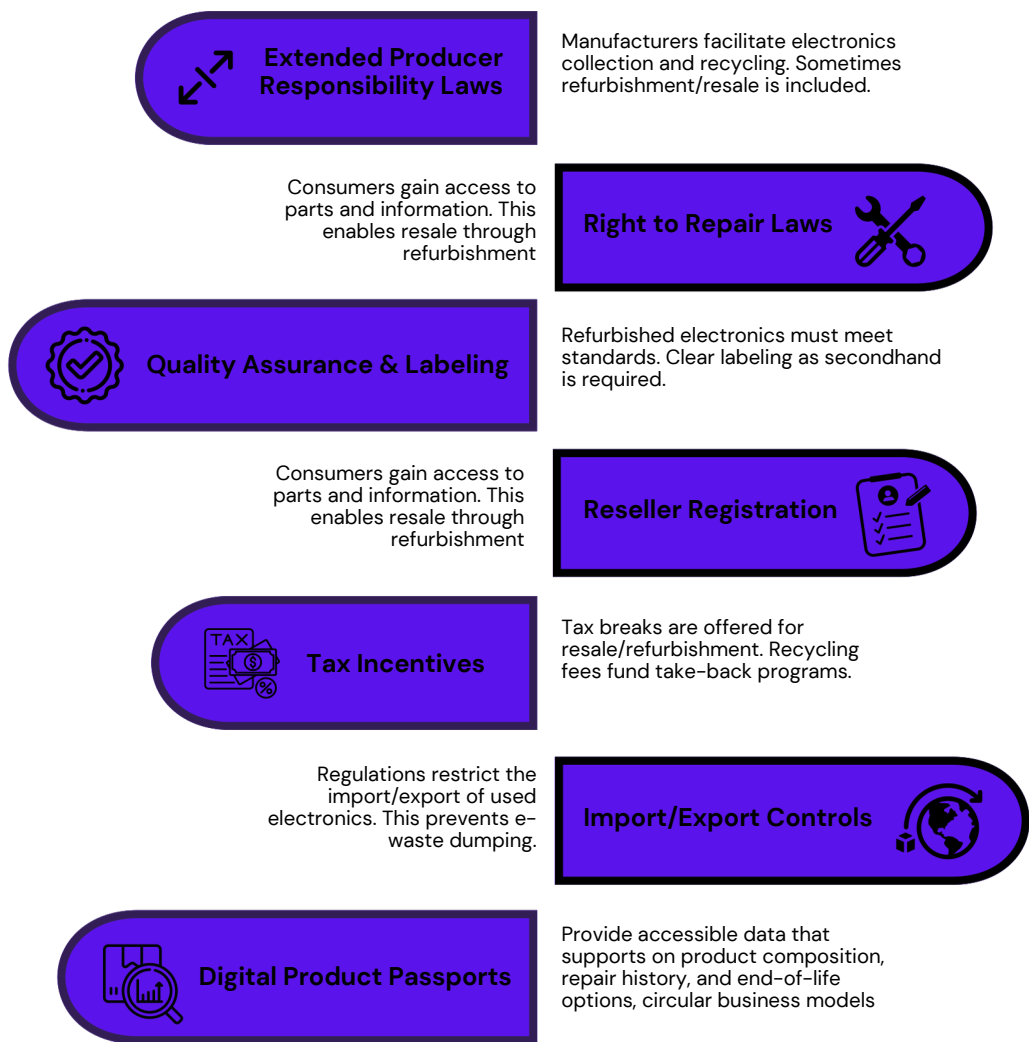
Blockchain and digital product passports provide transparency, traceability, and compliance.

OBADA (Open Blockchain for Asset Disposition Architecture) is advancing ISO 20435 for secure, tamper-proof digital records of physical IT assets.<sup>21</sup> Their work aligns with CIRPASS-2, an EU-backed initiative for DPP implementation. Other blockchain solutions include Circularise, used by industries to track material origins, and Verae, which offers auditable tracking with their DataCube technology.<sup>22</sup> These systems enable automated listings, certification, and secure transfers of devices on decentralized platforms.

**Regulatory Landscape**

Many countries now set explicit policy goals to boost the reuse, repair, refurbishment, and resale of electronics within their action plans or e-waste directives.<sup>23</sup> These measures directly support repair businesses and improve the viability of reselling refurbished goods. Figure 8 highlights the most influential regulatory levers shaping the circular economy for electronics—from extended producer responsibility (ERP) to right-to-repair laws, quality

**Figure 8. Regulations Shaping the Circular Economy for Electronics**



labeling, tax incentives, and cross-border controls. These rules are no longer optional or niche. They are becoming a global compliance baseline that directly impacts design, resale, and recovery strategies. Use this figure as a quick-reference guide to the forces driving regulatory convergence and to understand where your compliance posture may soon fall short.

EPR is a cornerstone of circular electronics policy worldwide. In the European Union, the WEEE Directive requires manufacturers to finance the collection, recycling, and recovery of electronics, and the upcoming 2025 EU Circular Economy Act will further harmonize EPR schemes and promote systemic change, including take-back programs and increased use of secondary materials.<sup>24</sup> In the United States, 25 states and the District of Columbia have electronics recycling laws that often require manufacturers to finance the collection and recycling of e-waste, with states like New York, Illinois, and Washington offering especially comprehensive EPR programs.<sup>25</sup> California stands out with its Electronic Waste Recycling Act and new 2025 rules, which require recycling fees at the point of sale, expanded coverage for battery-embedded products, and mandatory manufacturer reporting and take-back. Meanwhile, India and China have set strict targets for producers to recycle increasing percentages of e-waste, and countries such as South Africa and Nigeria are implementing EPR in the early stages.

Right to repair and refurbishment laws are also gaining traction. The European Union has expanded right to repair legislation, obligating companies to make replacement parts and repair information available to consumers and independent repairers.<sup>26</sup> In the United States, states such as New York, Minnesota, and

California have either passed or are considering right-to-repair laws that require manufacturers to provide parts, tools, and repair information for electronics.<sup>27</sup> India is also exploring a national right to repair framework to broaden consumer and business access to repair resources.

Quality assurance and labeling requirements are established in the EU, where used and refurbished electronics must meet technical standards and be clearly labeled as secondhand under WEEE and related directives. The new Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR) will introduce Digital Product Passports to enhance transparency and quality assurance.<sup>28</sup> In the United States, there is no uniform federal standard, but some states require labeling of refurbished electronics, and industry certifications such as R2 and e-Stewards are widely used.

Registration and licensing for resellers are required in countries like Germany, France, and the UK, where EPR and WEEE compliance mandates registration for businesses handling e-waste or secondhand electronics, ensuring traceability and consumer protection. Similarly, some US states require registration or licensing for e-waste handlers and secondhand electronics resellers as part of their e-waste management programs.

Tax incentives and fee structures further support circularity.<sup>29</sup> France uses “eco-participation” fees at the point of sale to fund recycling programs, with transparent reporting on fund usage. In California, recycling fees collected at sale fund e-waste management, and a new fee structure for battery-embedded products will take effect in October 2025. Other US states also use advance recycling fees or offer business incentives for electronics recycling and refurbishment.

Import and export controls are crucial to preventing e-waste dumping. The OECD and EU have updated rules and the Basel Convention's prior informed consent requirements to regulate international shipments of e-waste. In the US, the Secure E-waste Export and Recycling Act (SEERA) has been proposed to restrict e-scrap exports, and some states, such as California, have their own restrictions. China and India also have regulations to prevent e-waste dumping and sometimes to support domestic recycling and reuse.

Digital Product Passport (DPP) technology is set to become a legal requirement for electronics sold within the European Union (EU), although the precise deadlines and terms have yet to be established.<sup>30</sup> Importantly, the DPP requirement will apply to any electronics sold in the EU, regardless of where the product is manufactured or the company's headquarters are located. While the EC aims to finalize the DPP regulation in 2024 and begin implementation for the first product groups by 2026 or 2027, many details remain undecided. These include how to prioritize product groups, whether to include all company sizes, the level at which DPPs will be applied (item, batch, or model).

How DPP data will be stored and accessed are also unresolved. Currently, the EC's draft suggests that companies may choose their own data storage solutions, which could allow flexibility but could result in a fragmented landscape of incompatible systems. This fragmentation could make it difficult, especially for end-of-life (EoL) operators and recyclers, to access the data they need.

There are discussions about whether to standardize data storage protocols, create a shared EU-managed platform, or provide detailed technical guidelines to ensure interoperability and ease of access. Each option has implications for cost, complexity, and the ability of stakeholders to retrieve and use DPP data effectively.

Overall, these initiatives reflect a growing global commitment to a circular economy for electronics, with the EU and US states at the forefront of regulatory innovation and other countries making significant progress in EPR, right to repair, and responsible e-waste management.



# Recommendations

Every electronic device on your balance sheet is either depreciating landfill risk or untapped working capital. Circularity is not a side initiative—it is a strategic lever with measurable upside. A well-structured platform strategy allows companies to recover more value, mitigate compliance risks, and embed resilience in their operations. But unlocking these benefits requires more than selecting the right resale partner or standing up a single pilot. It demands deliberate, staged execution.

This section lays out a pragmatic roadmap that any CIO, sustainability lead, or facilities executive can follow over the next twelve to thirty-six months. Whether your drivers are financial, environmental, or operational, this path enables measurable progress from experimentation to enterprise-wide impact.

We recommend a phased approach anchored in three clear stages: **Pilot**, **Integrate**, and **Optimize**. Figure 9 provides a high-level overview of this three-phase strategy.

## ***Pilot Launch (First 4 Months)***

The first step is to select a business unit or asset category where volumes, refresh velocity, and resale value justify experimentation. For most companies, laptops and other high-turnover IT assets offer a good starting point. During the pilot, measure current recovery performance and set benchmarks for improvement. The goal is not

perfection—it's validation. Choose a resale partner or platform. Document every step of that allows for asset-level tracking, grading, and consistent recovery metrics. Establish SLAs for data sanitization, logistics, and reporting. the disposition flow: how long assets sit before processing, where delays occur, and how value is lost.

This is also where you revisit your circularity delta—the gap between what you spend on hardware and what you recover at retirement. If it's greater than 15%, the pilot should quantify how much of that can be reclaimed through resale, redeployment, or refurbishment.

While the right starting point will vary by organization, success always begins with a narrowly scoped pilot that delivers clear, measurable results.

## ***Integrate: Build the System (Next 14 Months)***

Once the pilot demonstrates operational and financial viability, shift focus toward building the systems and teams to support repeatability. This stage is about scaling horizontally—across regions, asset classes, and functional groups. Internal alignment becomes essential. IT, procurement, ESG, and finance must align on shared KPIs, standardized workflows, and consistent escalation paths. Without it, even the best platforms stall.

Now is the time to assess platform model fit. Five options exist, ranging from white-label to co-build. Your pilot results, asset volume, brand risk tolerance, and integration appetite will determine which route fits best.

If you require fast deployment and moderate customization, white-labeling an existing platform can provide a branded, lower-lift experience. If simplicity and outsourcing are priorities, a single-platform ITAD provider can handle the resale and compliance workflows end-to-end. Multi-platform strategies suit organizations with complex global operations or mixed asset types. Internal system integration is essential in this case to consolidate data and reporting.

For those seeking scale, control, and long-term payback, co-building or building your own platform offers the deepest integration—though it demands significant internal resources. You should treat these as default settings. Override only when brand control, data

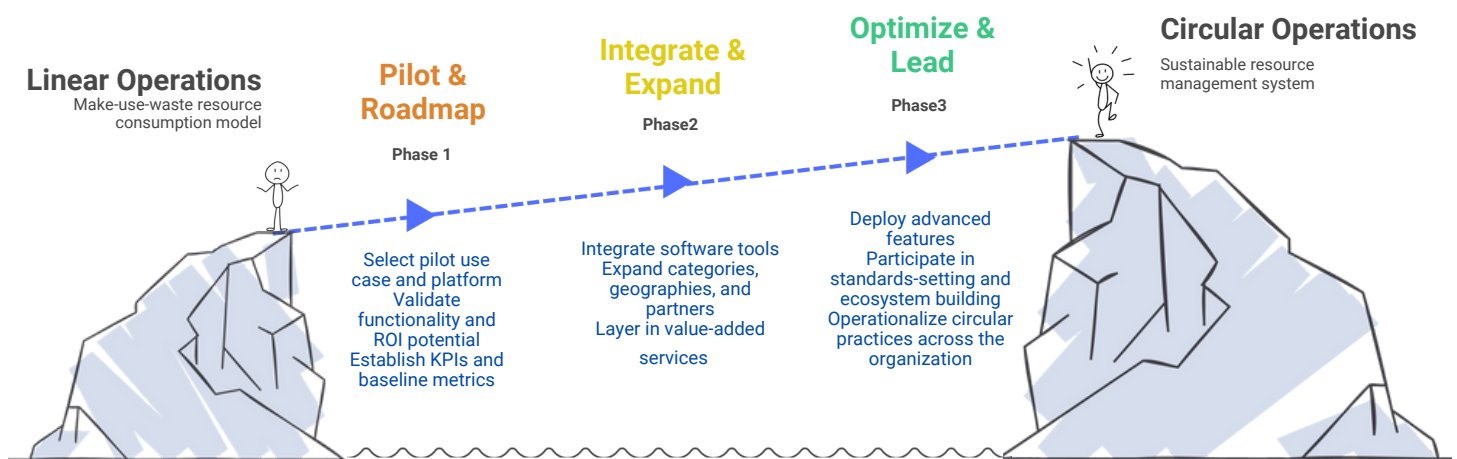
sovereignty, or internal capabilities create a compelling rationale. For instance, Microsoft’s Circularity Hub provides deep integration and high rates of reuse and recycling—but only because the company had the scale and internal talent to make it viable.

Whatever model you choose, resale partners must be transparent. Ask how they evaluate and refurbish assets, which resale channels they use, and how they maximize value. This step is often overlooked—and yet it’s key to capturing true recovery value.

This is also the right phase to incorporate value-added services like repair, refurbishment, warranty, or redeployment. Encourage take-back and buyback programs. Identify high-ROI reuse opportunities, especially in internal redeployment or parts harvesting.

Figure 10 offers a high level roadmap for this transformation. It shows how recovery operations

**Figure 9. Circular Platform Strategy and Deployment**



evolve—from tactical resale to systems integration and enterprise-wide optimization—over 12 to 36 months.

### ***Optimize: Build Advantage (Beyond 18 Months)***

Once circular processes are embedded, companies can begin to leverage them as differentiators—financially, operationally, and strategically. The most advanced organizations will use resale data and platform insights to inform procurement decisions, predict optimal refresh cycles, and model the residual value of assets over time. Platforms that were initially deployed for internal IT disposition can now support customer-facing initiatives such as trade-in programs, employee buyback portals, or donation campaigns.

With consistent data and established workflows, circularity can be tied to broader strategic goals. Some companies will use their platforms to drive measurable environmental gains. Others will reframe them as risk management tools, supporting compliance with tightening EPR, data protection, and right-to-repair mandates. Others still will use them to drive customer loyalty by offering credit for old equipment and simplifying the upgrade path.

At this stage, optimization often involves layering in value-added services such as refurbishment, warranty, or parts harvesting—whether through external partners or internal capabilities. The emphasis shifts from recovery alone to lifecycle value management.

Companies that reach this level also begin to influence broader standards and market expectations. Participation in sector-wide

**Figure 10. Roadmap for Electronics Asset Management**



platforms or industry initiatives can extend your impact while strengthening your leadership position.

By grounding the strategy in a measured **Pilot → Integrate → Optimize** sequence, companies can ensure early wins, build credibility, and create the foundation for long-term advantage.

This approach also reinforces a simple truth: a circular platforms offer a path forward to correct inefficient recovery and meet growing compliance pressures. The systems now exist to implement meaningful change. The opportunity is measurable. It's time to build and start narrowing the Circularity Delta.

# Conclusion

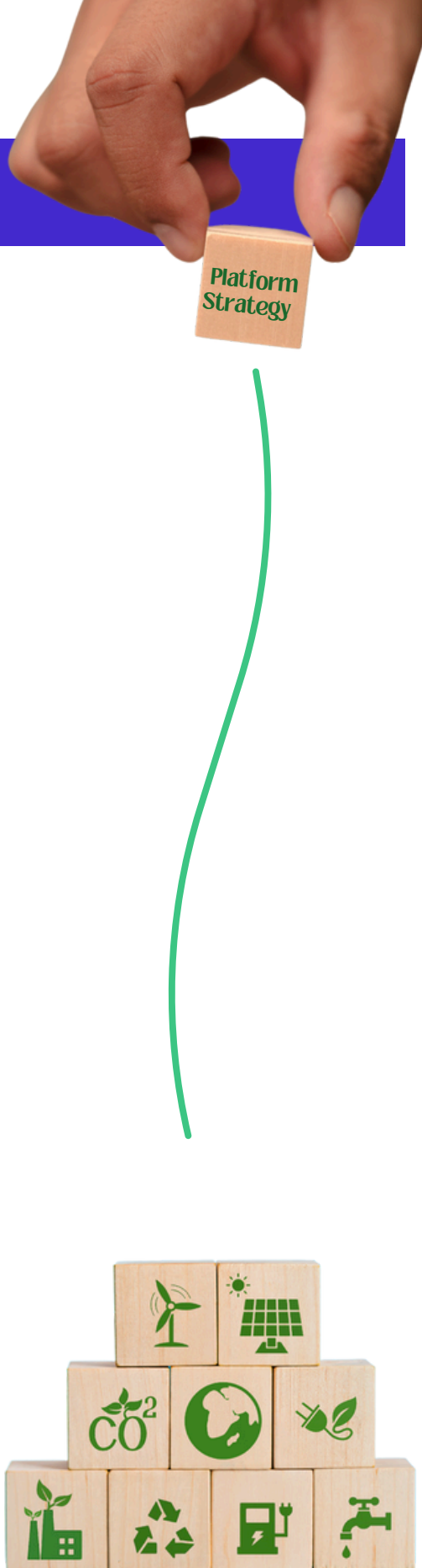
Most electronics recovery programs are built to minimize downside—focused on safe disposal, not value creation. That mindset leaves money on the table and exposes companies to growing regulatory and reputational risk.

The real opportunity is upstream: to use platforms not just to track and dispose, but to recover, reuse, and reinvest. Done right, circular platforms improve ESG posture, reduce compliance exposure, and unlock hidden working capital—all while delivering system-level visibility that spreadsheets and static audits simply can't.

These systems already exist. Resale markets are maturing. Regulations are tightening. And customers, investors, and employees are paying attention. What's been missing is a clear playbook, a common framework for platform models, deployment stages, and performance benchmarks.

This paper is meant to close that gap. It lays out the core decisions, tradeoffs, and execution steps that matter—from pilot to platform maturity—so leaders can move with confidence, not guesswork.

Circularity should not be relegated to a side initiative. It's a systems opportunity hiding in plain sight. The companies that treat it like infrastructure—not vendor management—will be the ones who lead.



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**Base Case:**  
Residual value per laptop = \$250 to \$300
  - $55M \times \$250 = \$13.8B$
  - $55M \times \$300 = \$16.5B$**Improved Case (25% higher recovery):**  
Residual value per laptop = \$310 to \$375
  - $55M \times \$310 = \$17.1B$
  - $55M \times \$375 = \$20.6B$**Difference (i.e., additional value unlocked):**
  - $\$17.1B - \$13.8B = \$3.3B$
  - $\$20.6B - \$16.5B = \$4.1B$
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# Appendix

## Circular Electronic Resale Platforms

This appendix provides a brief overview of digital platforms that support the resale of electronics. This list showcases a selection of platforms that facilitate the buying and selling of used, refurbished, and recycled electronics, each with unique business models and target markets. It is not a comprehensive list, but rather a lens into key players in the rapidly growing recommerce industry.

### Aucnet

HQ: Tokyo Japan

Platform Type: B2B

Markets Served: Global

Launched Electronics Resale: 2012

Aucnet Inc., headquartered in Tokyo, is a leading Japanese company specializing in online B2B auctions and circular commerce, with a significant presence in the used electronics market. Established in 1984, Aucnet pioneered real-time online auctions, initially for used vehicles, and has since expanded into digital products, including used mobile phones, tablets, and PCs. Its role in selling used electronics began in 2012 facilitating bulk auctions of pre-owned devices—particularly smartphones and computers—from Japanese operator stock and international sources. Aucnet ensures product quality through expert inspections, a grading system, and secure data erasure services. The platform lists over 30,000 used Japanese-spec smartphones and tablets weekly, featuring major brands like iPhone, iPad, and Android devices. Sourcing devices primarily via trade-in programs with carriers, manufacturers, retailers, and enterprises, Aucnet also processes and auctions devices collected in the U.S. through partnerships such as with Phobio. This multi-channel approach enables Aucnet to meet global demand for second-hand electronics, supporting sustainability by promoting reuse and efficient distribution in the secondary market.

### Amazon Resale

HQ: Seattle, WA, US

Platform Type: B2C Retail

Markets Served: Global

Launched Electronics Resale: 2000

Amazon supports the resale of used electronics through both its own programs and by empowering third-party sellers, offering customers a wide range of affordable and sustainable options. Through the Amazon Resale Program—encompassing Amazon Warehouse, Amazon Renewed, and initiatives like Amazon Second Chance—Amazon itself inspects, grades, and resells returned, open-box, or refurbished electronics. Products are carefully tested to ensure quality and are categorized by condition, giving buyers confidence and access to significant discounts, often over 25% off new prices. Additionally, Amazon's Trade-In Program allows customers to exchange old electronics for Amazon gift cards, further encouraging the reuse and recycling of devices. Third-party

sellers can also participate in the resale of used electronics on Amazon. Programs like Amazon Renewed allow approved businesses to refurbish and sell pre-owned electronics to a global customer base, provided they meet Amazon's strict quality standards and warranty requirements. The FBA Grade and Resell program lets sellers automatically relist eligible returned products as "Used," helping recover value from inventory that can't be sold as new. Together, these channels have made Amazon a leading marketplace for used electronics.

### **Back Market**

HQ: Paris, France  
Platform Type: B2C Retail  
Markets Served: Global  
Year Founded: 2014

Back Market, founded in Paris in 2014, is a leading global online marketplace specializing in certified refurbished electronics. The platform connects consumers with over 1,000 certified refurbishers, offering a broad range of pre-owned devices—such as smartphones, laptops, tablets, home appliances, and gaming consoles—at prices up to 70% lower than new. Back Market does not refurbish or sell products directly; instead, it provides a trusted platform where refurbishers can reach buyers. Every device undergoes rigorous testing to meet high standards and comes with a minimum 12-month warranty, transparent condition descriptions, and dedicated customer support, fostering trust and peace of mind. The company operates in over 17 countries and has sold more than 30 million devices, helping to avoid approximately 1.6 million tons of carbon emissions, underscoring its commitment to sustainability. In April 2025, Back Market partnered with iFixit to integrate repair guides and offer toolkits and spare parts, empowering users to repair their devices and extend product lifespans. The platform also provides trade-in services and device diagnostic tools, further supporting a circular economy and reducing electronic waste by making repair and refurbishment the default choice.

### **BidFTA**

HQ: Cincinnati, OH, US Platform  
Type: Auction marketplace Markets  
Served: N. America  
Launched electronics resale: 2008

BidFTA is a high-velocity online auction marketplace designed for rapid, scalable liquidation. Specializing in customer returns, overstock, and excess inventory from major retailers, BidFTA lists thousands of new items daily across diverse categories including electronics, appliances, furniture, and tools, often priced at up to 90% below retail. Each item auction starts at \$1 without reserve, driving real-time bidder engagement that sets true market pricing. Auctions run for 3–4 days, followed by a swift four-day pickup window at designated warehouse locations, ensuring rapid turnover from listing to liquidity—typically under 10 days. Beyond its digital marketplace, BidFTA also operates physical bin stores offering direct retail access to liquidation goods. Employing dynamic daily pricing models, these stores create a gamified shopping experience, boosting customer urgency and enhancing foot traffic throughout the week. BidFTA's model excels at handling high volumes and broad product assortments, effectively serving individual bargain hunters as well as resellers. Although the platform is optimized for general market inventory rather than niche or high-touch items, its efficient, high-turnover approach consistently delivers exceptional recovery value and profitable outcomes for partners.

### **B-Stock**

Redwood City, CA, US

Platform Type: Wholesale

Markets Served: United States

Year Founded: 2008

B-Stock is a leading B2B online liquidation auction platform that enables retailers and manufacturers to efficiently sell excess, returned, and overstock inventory, including a strong focus on electronics. Sellers can list large quantities of products, such as consumer electronics, cell phones, computers, and televisions, alongside categories like apparel, home goods, and industrial equipment. The platform's auction model connects sellers directly with a global network of qualified buyers, allowing for competitive bidding that often results in higher recovery rates than traditional liquidation methods. B-Stock's streamlined process helps sellers clear warehouse space and move inventory within 24-48 hours, with payments received just days after auction close<sup>5</sup>. Sellers simply upload manifests, while B-Stock manages the auction, buyer vetting, logistics, and dispute resolution, making the process seamless and efficient. B-Stock also provides detailed analytics and reporting, helping sellers optimize their strategies and maximize returns. As the world's largest B2B marketplace for returned and excess inventory, B-Stock offers transparency, efficiency, and market-driven pricing, transforming surplus and returns management into a revenue opportunity for brands and retailers, especially in the electronics sector.

### **Callisto**

HQ: London, UK

Platform Type: Wholesale

Markets Served: Global

Year Founded: 2017

Callisto is a leading B2B online marketplace that specializes in the wholesale trading of pre-owned, refurbished, and secondary technology equipment, including laptops, smartphones, tablets, and a variety of other IT devices. The company's platform is designed to connect buyers and sellers from around the world, offering a secure, efficient, and transparent environment for trading high-quality, graded tech products. Callisto's role in the buying and selling of used laptops and IT equipment is to streamline and professionalize the process, providing businesses with multiple transaction options such as auctions, catalog listings, and direct offers. This flexibility allows companies to efficiently manage their inventory and access a global network of trusted partners. Security and trust are at the core of Callisto's operations. The company employs rigorous customer verification processes, escrow-held payments, and transparent device grading standards to ensure that every transaction is safe and reliable. With a global reach that includes over 3,000 buyers and sellers across more than 60 countries, Callisto has facilitated over \$1.6 billion in gross merchandise value since 2019. In addition to its marketplace services, Callisto also offers a buy-back program for businesses looking to sell used equipment. This program provides the option of account credit for future purchases or direct financial compensation, making it easy for organizations to upgrade their technology while recouping value from their old devices. The company further distinguishes itself with same-day international shipping, in-house engineering support, and a reliable repair center, ensuring a seamless experience for its clients. By enabling the resale and reuse of IT equipment, Callisto not only helps businesses maximize value but also contributes to reducing electronic waste and the environmental impact associated with manufacturing new devices.

### **eBay Refurbished**

HQ: San Jose, CA, US

Platform Type: B2C Retail

Markets Served: Global

Launched Electronics Resale: 2020

eBay Inc. is a leading global e-commerce company founded in 1995, connecting millions of buyers and sellers across over 190 markets. eBay Refurbished was established in 2021 as a response to changing consumer behaviors and significant supply chain disruptions that made many new items scarce, particularly during the holiday season. It grew from eBay's earlier Certified Refurbished initiative, which launched in 2020 and focused on offering like-new products sourced directly from top brands. The program features a range of electronics, particularly smartphones, laptops, and other tech devices restored to specific standards and categorized as Certified, Excellent, Very Good, or Good. Each item undergoes rigorous multi-point inspections and professional reconditioning, ensuring full functionality and reliability. To participate in eBay Refurbished, sellers must meet strict criteria, including being a Top-Rated Seller with at least 98% positive feedback, which helps maintain high standards and buyer confidence. Products sold through the program typically include a 1- or 2-year warranty, free shipping, and a 30-day money-back guarantee, with Certified Refurbished items also offering free returns. These benefits provide significant peace of mind for buyers and make refurbished purchases more attractive. Beyond value and quality assurance, eBay Refurbished contributes to environmental sustainability by extending the lifecycle of electronics and reducing e-waste. Since its launch, the program has prevented thousands of tons of greenhouse emissions and waste, positioning eBay as a leader in the recommerce industry and making refurbished tech a mainstream, eco-friendly choice for consumers.

### **Flipkart**

HQ: Bengaluru, India

Platform Type: B2C Retail

Markets Served: India

Launched Electronics Resale: 2022

Flipkart, headquartered in Bengaluru, India, is a leading e-commerce platform with a significant presence in the resale of used electronics. Flipkart's electronic resale programs were officially established in February 2022 with the launch of the "Sell Back Programme." This program enables customers to trade in old smartphones, laptops, and other electronics for instant vouchers or discounts on new purchases. Flipkart partners with certified refurbishers to inspect, repair, and resell these devices as "certified refurbished" products, each backed by a warranty for added buyer confidence.

In addition to consumer-focused initiatives, Flipkart has launched "Flipkart Reset for Business" (September 2024), a mobile app designed to help enterprises and third-party sellers efficiently resell refurbished electronics. This program streamlines onboarding, ensures a rigorous 74-point quality check, and provides competitive pricing, addressing key concerns like quality assurance and logistics. The platform currently focuses on smartphones and accessories, serving over 800 cities across India.

By collaborating with third-party sellers and refurbishers, Flipkart offers a wide selection of used electronics, supporting both B2C and B2B markets. These initiatives strengthen Flipkart's role as a trusted marketplace, promoting sustainability and affordability in India's fast-growing reCommerce sector.

### **Jumia Deals**

HQ: Lagos, Nigeria

Platform Type: B2C Retail

Markets Served: Africa

Year Founded: 2017

Jumia is a leading e-commerce platform operating across multiple African countries, widely recognized for offering a broad range of new products including electronics, fashion, and home appliances. Beyond new goods, Jumia has expanded into the second-hand market through its dedicated sub-platform, Jumia Deals. This platform plays a crucial role in facilitating the buying and selling of used or pre-owned items, providing a secure and convenient online marketplace for individuals and businesses alike. In the realm of used electronics, Jumia Deals is particularly significant. It enables consumers to access a diverse selection of second-hand electronic products such as smartphones, laptops, tablets, and other gadgets. This not only makes technology more affordable and accessible to a wider audience but also promotes sustainability by extending the lifecycle of electronic devices. Sellers benefit from a trusted environment to reach potential buyers without the complexities of traditional resale methods. Jumia Deals complements the broader Jumia ecosystem, which includes reliable logistics, secure payment options like JumiaPay, and customer protection policies, ensuring that transactions involving used electronics are smooth and trustworthy. By addressing the demand for affordable electronics and supporting circular commerce, Jumia Deals strengthens Jumia's position as a comprehensive e-commerce leader in Africa, catering to diverse consumer needs in both new and used product markets.

### **NorthLadder**

HQ: Dubai, UAE

Platform Type: B2C Retail

Markets Served: Middle East and North Africa

Year Founded: 2001

NorthLadder is a Dubai-based online marketplace specializing in the buying and selling of pre-owned electronic devices, launched in 2018. The company has quickly become a regional leader, facilitating the trade of over 40,000 devices and serving more than 30,000 customers. NorthLadder operates on a circular economy model, aiming to reduce e-waste by extending the life cycle of electronics and making it easy for individuals to sell their old devices for cash. Customers receive instant cash offers for their devices, which can be traded in at over 200 designated locations or through free home pick-up. NorthLadder ensures privacy and security with a certified data wipe service. The company has partnered with major retailers such as Carrefour, Lulu, EMAX, and Jumbo Electronics, expanding its reach and convenience. NorthLadder's auction-driven platform connects sellers directly to a network of over 500 dealers, ensuring competitive prices and efficient transactions. Originally launched in the UAE, NorthLadder now operates in over 10 countries, including significant presence in Saudi Arabia and Europe through the acquisition of Renewd®. Serving both consumers and businesses, NorthLadder is positioned as a key player in the sustainable tech market, promoting affordability, convenience, and environmental responsibility.

### **Recycle Global Exchange (RGX)**

HQ: Castle Rock, CO, US

Platform Type: B2B Wholesale

Markets Served: United States

Year Founded: 2019

Recycle Global Exchange (RGX) is a digital marketplace based in Castle Rock, Colorado, that specializes in business e-waste and IT asset disposal. Founded in 2019, RGX connects businesses directly with local, certified vendors to dispose of electronic waste responsibly and efficiently. This platform is designed to reduce carbon footprints while increasing ROI through competitive bidding and resource management. As a neutral, automated platform, RGX directly connects businesses with certified local recyclers through a competitive bidding process. This eliminates the need for intermediaries, reduces administrative overhead, and ensures efficient handling of e-waste. One of RGX's key strengths lies in its ability to localize recycling efforts. By matching customers with recyclers within close proximity—often within 60 miles—RGX significantly reduces transportation costs and associated carbon emissions. This localized approach not only minimizes environmental impact but also supports smaller, local recyclers, fostering economic diversity and sustainability. The platform further enhances efficiency by automating job postings, bidding, and compliance tracking, enabling businesses to manage the entire e-waste process seamlessly. RGX also prioritizes transparency and accountability. Customers can access detailed job records, including Certificates of Destruction (CODs), through a centralized database. This ensures compliance with environmental regulations while simplifying audits. The platform also automates financial transactions and provides centralized compliance records, making audits easier for businesses. Additionally, RGX tracks carbon emissions associated with each project to enhance transparency and environmental impact.

### **Shopee**

HQ: Singapore

Platform Type: B2C and C2C

Markets Served: Southeast Asia

Year Founded: 2015

Shopee is the largest e-commerce platform in Southeast Asia, operating across countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore. Founded in Singapore in 2015, Shopee has rapidly grown due to its mobile-first approach, hyper-localized strategies, and a user-friendly app that dominates regional online shopping habits. With over 343 million monthly visits and a gross merchandise volume projected to reach \$83.4 billion in 2024, Shopee is a central hub for both new and used goods, including electronics. In the electronics sector, Shopee is particularly influential. It hosts a vast marketplace for mobile phones, tablets, computers, accessories, and smart wearables, with used and refurbished electronics being a significant part of the ecosystem. The platform's consumer-to-consumer (C2C) roots make it easy for individuals and small businesses to list and sell pre-owned gadgets, meeting strong demand from budget-conscious and tech-savvy buyers. Thailand and Vietnam are leading markets for electronics sales, but Shopee's reach is broad across Southeast Asia. Shopee's integrated logistics, payment solutions, and social features—like live chat and in-app games—help build trust and engagement, making it a go-to destination for those seeking affordable used electronics in the region.

### **Xianyu (Alibaba Group)**

HQ: Hongzhou, Zhejiang, China

Platform Type: C2C Retail

Markets Served: China

Year Founded: 2014

Xianyu, launched by Alibaba Group in 2014, is China's largest consumer-to-consumer (C2C) online marketplace for second-hand goods, serving over 500 million registered users. Originally a spin-off from Taobao's second-hand market, Xianyu has grown into a comprehensive platform where individuals can buy and sell a wide range of used items, including electronics, clothing, and collectibles. The platform plays a significant role in facilitating the resale of used electronics. Xianyu offers specialized services such as product recycling, third-party inspections, and authentication for high-value items like smartphones and laptops, helping to build trust in transactions involving non-standard, high-priced goods. To ensure safety and reduce fraud, Xianyu requires users to verify their identities by linking their accounts to mobile phone numbers and social media profiles, while a dedicated moderation team monitors suspicious activity. Xianyu's integration with Alibaba's ecosystem, including Alipay for secure payments, further streamlines the buying and selling process. As the second-hand electronics market in China grows, Xianyu's user-friendly features and robust verification systems have made it a central hub for young consumers looking to trade idle electronic devices securely and efficiently.

## About the Authors



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**Peter C. Evans** is a globally recognized expert on digital platforms and corporate strategy with over 25 years of experience in the field. He is currently Senior Advisor, Enterprise Strategy at Capital Growth Partners and the co-founder of the Circular Fractional Network. He has held senior strategy roles at large global enterprises (former Partner at KPMG, Senior Director, Strategy and Analytics at General Electric). He is the co-chair of the MIT Platform Strategy Summit and an Advisory Board member at Marketplace Risk. He co-hosts the podcast All Things Circular and has written over 50 articles on platform strategy for his Substack The Platform Professional. He is a lifetime member of the Council on Foreign Relations and served on the board of the National Association for Business Economics. Peter received his BA from Hampshire College and his master's and PhD degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



**Guennaël "G" Delorme** is the founder of TICE Group ([tice-group.com](http://tice-group.com)), the neutral orchestration system for circular commerce, a control tower that connects trade-in, returns, and resale into one accountable flow. He helps brands recover more value from every return by building systems that hold, from the floor up, not the deck down. Before founding TICE, he built and scaled two \$100-million-plus programs at Samsung, including the world's first OEM Certified Pre-Owned initiative, and later led global trade-in at SquareTrade / Allstate. A former BCG consultant, he bridges strategy and execution to help brands launch circular models fast, without new tools, teams, or significant IT investment. He also serves on the Board of Directors of OBADA, an emerging blockchain standard for IT asset disposition."

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**Circular Fractional Network:** The Circular Fractional Network (CFN) is a group of senior executives that have specialized knowledge and experience to establish circular business models. Each of our members is uniquely qualified to provide their expertise as fractional executives in creating a circular ecosystem across an enterprise, supported by strategic relationships with aligned business partners. CFN matches companies seeking circularity expertise with experienced executive talent. **All Things Circular** is an advisory firm specializing in circular enterprise strategy, reverse logistics and advanced material value generation.



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