

ZERO WASTE INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

October 2010

I guess the New York Times must be reading these Newsletters. Well, almost, - fact is dey dont rede it so gud.

It was just last month that we reported here that there is no such thing as “proper electronic recycling” even though all of the so-called “e-waste” propaganda refers to it as though it actually existed. And we were rude enough to point out that the giveaway is that the only thing that any of the bogus e-waste recycling operations ever discussed were the most trivial questions like who was “accepting” or “taking” which kind of e-waste this month or what they were paying or charging for it. But there is never any discussion of what actually happens to the “recycled” electronics.

At that point, no one else was pointing out that the e-waste emperor had no clothes.

This month, the NYT sort of caught up. Check out http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/27/opinion/27royte.html?_r=1 for an expose of exactly what you read here first. Elizabeth Royte, who thinks garbage is cute and writes that way, took note that the so-called “proper” programs are actually sending the electronics to the same places as the “improper” places that the “proper” programs were set up to avoid. She wrote: *“It's easy to find American companies that call themselves computer recyclers, but it's hard to trace what they actually do”*. Welcome on board Elizabeth.

Her conventional wisdom takes her no further. She then writes: *“Even the electronics industry doesn't like this patchwork approach, but so far, no one has come up with anything better.”*

Wrong Elizabeth!

Wrong New York Times!

As we all know now, the solution is called Zero Waste.

If you only look at the same garbage industry based approaches that have failed so miserably, of course you won't find anything that works any better.

The simple fact: You can't design a commodity to be used for a short time and then be discarded, and yet come along at the last minute to pull your chestnuts out of the fire to make a tasty, fresh chestnut pie. If your

chestnuts are roasted to death in a Chinese village well, duh, that's how you designed it.

If you want to do better, you need to design for reuse, including dismantling, refurbishing and repair. You need to stop marginalizing the computer refurbishing industry by subsidizing the discard and garbage industry. You need to bite the bullet and accept reduced sales of cheap, new computers while encouraging people to make use of refurbished, repairable computers that last a long time. You will be making plenty of new jobs for repairmen, for refurbishers and for rebuilders of all kinds. These are jobs that will stay in America and employ technically retrained Americans. Is there anything wrong with that?

Apparently the recyclers, the garbage industry, the government and the manufacturers of cheap junk in foreign countries think there is.

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Note 1:

More revelations like the Royte story can be found at:
<http://www.ban.org/banreports/10-24-05/index.htm>