

Improving Event Logistics and Expanding the ACCESS Tech Initiative



CPCs Clare Benson (left) and Emilia Nietresta (right) disassembling hard drives from laptops to prepare them for data sanitization, during the IT Donation Event on October 27, 2022. Photo credit: Matt Clarke

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Overview

40 million tons of e-waste are generated annually worldwide – equivalent to throwing out 800 laptops every second.¹ In Hamilton, citizens are estimated to generate over 2.4 million kilograms of e-waste annually.² The ACCESS Tech initiative aims to reduce e-waste by accepting electronic donations from the McMaster community, providing high-quality donations to Hamiltonians in need through partnership with Empowerment Squared³ (E2), offering other usable electronics to members of the McMaster community, and recycling any items not suitable for reuse.⁴ Following the 2019 and 2021 donation and reuse events, with over 1,000 kg⁵ and 780 kg⁶ of e-waste diverted, respectively, our goal was to improve event logistics and expand the ACCESS Tech initiative to reduce waste and provide greater access to technology within our local communities.

Objectives

1. Improve the efficiency of donation and reuse events
2. Create a stronger relationship with the McMaster community
3. Track and report on the outcomes of the overall process

Reporting

To achieve our first objective, we hosted separate donation and reuse events to improve the attendee experience. We held the IT Donation Event on October 27th to receive used electronics from the McMaster community. We revised the logical flow for the event, allowing us to efficiently record, store, and prepare items for data sanitization, leading to considerably reduced processing time and allowing for timely donation to Hamiltonians in need. On November 17th, we hosted the IT Reuse Event for members of the McMaster community to upcycle remaining items. Items not reused were responsibly recycled.

To achieve our second objective, we provided gourmet donuts to attendees during the IT Donation Event, which also increased awareness of and attracted passersby to learn more about the ACCESS Tech initiative. Following the event, we sent our donors a thank-you email with statistics from the event to show their impact, along with additional ACCESS Tech information. We strengthened relationships with attendees during the IT Reuse Event by offering prizes, displaying improved signage and information, and offering stickers.

To achieve our third objective, we reported on the success of our events, highlighting the 114 items donated through E2, over 2,000 kgs* reused by members of the McMaster community, and 650 kgs responsibly recycled. Compared to previous ACCESS Tech events, these have been the most successful to date, based on the highest number of devices diverted from the waste stream and donated for reuse.

Collaborators

We extend our gratitude to our Community Project Champions for their involvement and mentorship throughout the project. We acknowledge the SUSTAIN 3S03 ACCESS Tech Communications Team; SUSTAIN 4S06 Research Team; Dr. Kate Whalen; our dedicated event volunteers; and the ACCESS Tech Working Group, Carlos Figueira, Richard Godsmark, Paula Brown-Hackett. Thank you to Donut Monster for contributing to our donation event. Thank you to E2 for disseminating the collected electronics to those in need. Thank you Greentec for recycling our collected end-of-life electronics. Finally, a huge thanks to all members of the McMaster community for donating and upcycling used electronics; your contribution to ACCESS Tech is invaluable!

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See a full list of references [here](#).

*metrics captured from two reuse events, with the first event being run by ACCESS Tech staff on September 29th with support from SUSTAIN 3S03 ACCESS Tech students.

