

Miss Dorothy

Dad came home from work the other week with his old office computer carefully resting on the back seat of his car.

'Got into work this morning to find that my boss had upgraded all the computers in the place.'

'But I can't see much wrong with this one - it's just got a little scratch on it,' I said.

'Ah,' said Dad, 'but the memory is almost used up, and all the new technology means that programmes are better and work quicker too. Most companies and organisations need to upgrade their computers every three or four years anyway. Of course, as senior salesman for Doggydos Biscuits I need to remain at the cutting edge of today's technology!'

'So what are you going to do with that one, Dad?' I asked.

'I'll take it to the tip in the morning,' he said.

It seemed a bit of a waste to me but I said I'd go with him so I could get out of tidying my bedroom. Cool!

The next morning we arrived at our local 'civic amenities site' (why can't they just call it a dump like everyone else?). Dad struggled up the metal stairs to the first enormous skip carrying the screen and control box, and I stumbled along behind with the keyboard and mouse. Why had Dad left them all still connected to each other? When Dad reached the top of the steps he put it all on the edge of the skip. He was just going to push it all over when there was a great:

'Stoooooooooppppp!!!'

But Dad was still holding all the old computer stuff, and the yell made him jump so he dropped it! He disappeared over the side and that dragged the

keyboard in too. I was left standing on the steps holding the computer mouse like a precious toy! Luckily for Dad, the skip had been almost full, so he hadn't fallen very far. He was sitting on a mound of black sacks with the computer on his lap.



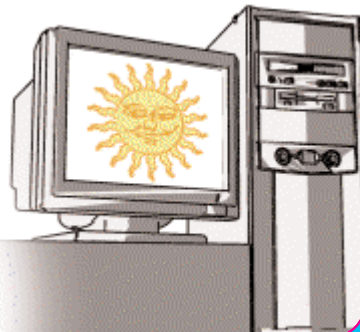
'Caught it,' said Dad. The caretaker who looks after the dump came running up the stairs in a panic. He was scared in case Dad had hurt himself.

He helped Dad get out and we went to his office, where he gave Dad a mug of tea. He told us he'd just heard about a recycling project for computers, which he was keen to explore. He said that nearly a MILLION TONNES of electrical and electronic stuff was being thrown away every year, and a lot of this was computers and all the bits that go with them. That's an awful lot of electrical rubbish!

'But what can be done with it?' asked Dad. 'After all, we're getting rid of it because it's overloaded and out of date.'

'There are organisations around who train unemployed people to do up old computers and upgrade the systems. These people are then often able to find jobs using their new skills, and the refurbished computers are donated to good causes: schools, charities, disabled people and those who don't earn very much. Some of them are sent to other countries through charities. If it's OK with you, I'll pass your PC on to one of these organisations.'

'Of course,' said Dad. Well, this sounded a much better idea to me than just sending it all to machine heaven.



'We wanted to get an old computer for Brownies,' I said to Dad, 'so that we could check out all the Brownie news on the Girlguiding UK website from time to time, and make posters and write letters. Do you think they might have a spare one?'

'I'll have a word and let your dad know,' said the caretaker, taking down Dad's telephone number.

A couple of weeks later, Dad arrived in the middle of Brownies carrying a gleaming white computer.

'A present from the computer recycling project,' he announced. 'Perhaps Dot can tell you all about it while I set this up for you.'

'... So, you see, an old computer need not be rubbish,' I said when I'd finished my talk, pointing to our brand new computer. But as I pointed at it, my eye caught sight of... could it really be... a familiar little scratch!

After the computer episode, I decided to find out a bit more about recycling. There's more to it than just putting jam jars in a bottle bank! Did you know that about three quarters of the 'rubbish' we throw away could actually be recycled? Why not check out your 'green' knowledge by having a go at this quiz? You'll find the answers on page 76.



True or false?

Which of these recycling statements are true?

- a. Each household in the UK produces about one tonne of rubbish every year.
- b. In Britain, we recycle more than in any other countries.
- c. There are over 20,000 bottle banks in Britain.
- d. One third of all household 'rubbish' is kitchen and garden waste.
- e. You can't recycle mobile phones.
- f. Taking a shower uses half as much water as having a bath.
- g. You can put kitchen foil in can banks.

Circle time

Circle all the things that can be recycled.
 glass paper newspaper clothes drinks
 cans plastic bottles shoes computers

Go green

Fill in the missing words to find some good green ideas!

water trees
 cycle birds light

Switch off the _____ when you leave the room.
 Save _____ - buy recycled paper.
 Walk or _____ on short journeys - don't go in the car.
 Help _____ by feeding them in winter.
 Save _____ - turn off dripping taps.



Find out more about Dot's adventures - visit her at her very own web site www.missdorothy.com



Web safe