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Re. E-waste from AI computers could 'escalate beyond control'\*

(\*Excerpts from the report published in The Business Standard, Tuesday November 05, 2024)

Researchers predicting a thousand-fold increase in e-waste from AI computer servers by 2030 called for recycling strategies to reduce the environmental impact.

A new study estimates that electronic waste (e-waste) created from generative AI data centers could rise to 5 million tons per year by 2030.

The increasing popularity of generative AI is projected to result in the rapid growth of e-waste, electronic waste, according to a study published in Nature Computational Science.

It's clear from this study that the nature of the e-waste crisis is global. E-waste makes up 70% of the total toxic waste produced around the world each year, yet only 12.5% of e-waste is recycled. This live counter at The World Counts shows just how fast e-waste is growing. "Reducing e-waste is important because improper disposal leads to the release of hazardous materials, like lead and mercury, which harm ecosystems and human health".

The researchers in the study published October 28, 2024, focused on e-waste produced from generative AI algorithms — types of AI that generate texts, images, videos or music from massive datasets. It's clear from previous research that AI has high energy requirements — calculations by research firm Semi Analysis suggest AI could result in data centers using 4.5% of global energy production by 2030.

The study says, "it's less clear how much e-waste is produced from generative AI programs, such as ChatGPT. This includes all the computer resources required for training and using AI in data centers. And because generative AI is dependent on rapid improvements in hardware infrastructure and chip technologies, there are indications it's leading to more e-waste as the hardware gets updated or replaced." Circular economy strategies aim to minimize waste and increase the efficiency of computer hardware.

Eco Recycling Limited is India's leading E-waste Management Company, providing a seamless integrated solution for handling E-waste, including asset removal, inventory management, packing, reverse logistics, data destruction, asset recovery, recycling, and more. Ecoreco ensures compliance with international standards by utilizing technologies from the US, Europe, and Japan, as well as developing their own in-house solutions for precious metal recovery, data destruction, and lamp recycling. Their clientele encompasses a wide range of organizations, MNCs, Retailers, government departments, NGOs, households, and educational institutions.

Thanking you,

For Eco Recycling Limited

Moneesha Leva.

Maneesha Jena

Company Secretary & Compliance Officer

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