



In May 2007, Apple Inc. became the third major U.S. computer brand to set public take back goals for recycling old computers at the request of activist shareholders led by As You Sow. This victory is the result of several years of deepening dialog with the company. Apple made its announcement just one week before a shareholder resolution asking the company to report on its recycling efforts, filed by As You Sow, came to a vote. As You Sow secured an unprecedented meeting with Apple CEO Steve Jobs and CFO Peter Oppenheimer in February 2007 to discuss the need for aggressive take back recovery goals and other improvements in computer recycling and chemical policies.

Electronic waste is one of the fastest growing elements of our waste stream, with an estimated 163,420 computers and televisions becoming obsolete in the U.S. every day, according to the Computer Take-Back Campaign. This waste is highly toxic with lead, mercury and other hazardous components. Most of this waste is sent to landfills where these heavy metals and other toxins leach into groundwater supplies or is burned generating PCBs and other dangerous air pollutants. Where recovery programs exist, many frequently dump this waste in third-world countries for dismantling under dangerous conditions.

Returning computer equipment directly to producers' recycling systems, where safer disposal can be verified, greatly reduces the potential for unsafe dumping and disposal of toxics in developing countries. As You Sow has worked with Dell, Hewlett-Packard and now Apple to develop a metric to track and measure returned units based on previous sales. In 2006, Apple estimates it took back 9.5% of computers sold seven years ago, a figure close to that of Dell. Under the goals announced by Apple, it plans to triple this percentage to 28% by 2010, which would move it significantly ahead of its competitors. As You Sow now plans to focus on pushing television manufacturers to take responsibility for TVs when they are discarded.