



The Nigerian E-Waste Problem: Way Forward

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Abstract. Technology has constantly evolved, leading to the invention and manufacturing of enhanced electronic and ICT devices. This has fueled the desire for people, companies and organizations to continuously upgrade their electronic and ICT infrastructure. Basically the circulation of these devices is on the increase. However, if new devices continuously replace existing ones, what happens to the ones replaced? Where do they go? How are they managed today? Unfortunately, these old devices end up in under developed and developing countries as “Tokumbos” (second hand, handed down), cheap alternatives. Such countries clearly lack the technology and technical know-how to appropriately recycle or dispose of them when they break down and become irreparable. They then end up as electronic waste (e-waste) not properly managed. Local disposal techniques employed by scavengers in such countries lead to consequences detrimental to the environment, the economy, ecology and lives of their people. This paper looks into the lingering problem of e-waste in Nigeria. It traces its source, reviews its negative impacts and via a comparative study on countries that have good waste management practices, vis-à-vis efforts so far by the Nigerian government, seeks to suggest how to improve on the countries e-waste management strategies.

Keywords: Assessing · E-Waste · Problem · Way-forward

1 Introduction

Electronic waste also known as e-waste can be defined from different perspectives. The Basel Convention defined e-waste as “substance or objects, which are disposed of or are intended to be disposed of or are required to be disposed of by the provisions of national law” [1, 2]. The United Nations Statistics Division defined e-waste as “materials that are produced for the market for which the generator and the user has no further use in terms of its purposes of production, transformation or consumption, and of which they want to dispose” [3]. Thus, e-waste can simply be viewed as any electronic device that is either of the following; damaged beyond repair, whose life cycle has expired, has become obsolete, can still be used, but consequently rejected by the user. All definitions of e-waste have a key point in common, which is that the device is no longer needed or useful to the owner. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) categorize waste into three categories namely,