

## E-Waste Couture

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Every year millions of pieces of electronic equipment is produced and sold worldwide. The shelf life of laptops, cell phones, and televisions is becoming shorter and shorter. When these items are discarded they crowd landfills and recycling centers and become known as E-Waste (Griffin, 2014). E-Waste can be recycled, but the process involves use of toxic chemicals to break down the materials, exposure to lead and other dioxins (Griffin, 2014). Many electronics also contain precious metals like silver, gold and copper, which are extracted from circuit boards using dangerous methods like boiling and acid (Griffin, 2014). The purpose of this project is to bring awareness to the dangers and proliferation of E-Waste and safely repurpose E-Waste into a new form as an embellishment.

Electronic pieces included in the design were a laptop, desktop monitor, five keyboards, a laptop cooler, and multiple discarded circuit boards. All items were retrieved through donations, garbage bins and thrift stores and were in non-working order. Each piece was carefully broken apart by hand and dangerous materials discarded. All breaking of equipment was done with proper safety equipment. A Dremel tool was used to drill holes into the plastic pieces to allow them to be sewn onto the dress by hand.





The gown was constructed using draping and flat patterning techniques. The body of the dress is made of black cotton twill overlaid with polyester netting. The bodice is boned, lined and has an invisible zipper up the back. The hem of the dress features a large black interfaced band supporting the weight of the electronic pieces. The dress has a decorative clasp closure at the back waist and an overlapping pointed back neck closure. The bodice of the dress is embellished with keys from a laptop keyboard that spread into the netting on the skirt. The neckline and armholes are bound with handmade bias tape cut from the black twill.

Griffin, D. (2014). Electronic waste hazards. *Information Today*, 31(1), 1, 36