

Study: Cell phones are hazardous waste

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U.S. scientists have determined cellular telephones consumers discard by the millions each year qualify as hazardous waste.

Oladele Ogunseitan and colleagues at the University of California-Irvine estimate more than 700 million cell phones have been discarded or are awaiting disposal, with 130 million cell phones trashed during 2005 alone.

The researchers analyzed chemicals in simulated cell phone "leachate" -- the liquid that runs into the soil from cell phones in dumps and landfills -- and said their findings have "profound implications" for the ultimate disposal of cell phones, the researchers said.

"These data demonstrate that electronics manufacturers who seek to design products exempt from current hazardous waste classifications will need to address not just lead, as the current wave of responses to European and Japanese regulations has shown, but also nickel, antimony and zinc, and, most importantly, copper content."

The research is reported in the April 1 issue of the journal *Environmental Science & Technology*.

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