

# Gadget Watch: ATM turns your old phone into cash

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This undated photograph provided by ecoATM, shows the EcoATM, which is a cupboard-sized machine with a big touch screen and a big metal “mouth” where you can place your old phone or MP3 player. Its analysis complete, it gives you a quote on the spot, based on what a network of hundreds of electronics-recycling companies are willing to pay for it. If you accept, it spits out cash. (AP Photo/ecoATM)

(AP) -- The International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas is all about the latest smartphones, tablet computers and other devices. But what about the old gadgets? Don't they get any love?

Actually, one machine at the show is designed to help recycle gadgets, giving old phones a fitting end, or a better home.

Drop your [phone](#) into the EcoATM, and the machine will pay you what it believes the handset is worth. The cupboard-sized machine has a large touch screen and a big metal "mouth" where you can place your old phone or MP3 player. It takes pictures of the device to figure out what kind of shape it's in. Then, you choose one of the machine's many cables to connect your device. The machine will figure out if the device's internals are working.

When its analysis is complete, it gives you a quote on the spot, based on what a network of hundreds of electronics-recycling companies are willing to pay for it. If you accept, it spits out cash. In a demonstration by EcoATM founder Bill Bowles, it said a Verizon [iPhone](#) 4 was worth \$221.

An older phone might not be worth reselling, but the machine will take it anyway, and give you a dollar. The company will melt down the phone in an environmentally friendly fashion to extract the precious metals from it.

**WHY IT'S HOT:** It's tough to recycle old electronics. Collection bins are few and far between, though some electronics stores accept items for recycling. You can sell newer phones on [eBay](#), but it's a bit of a hassle.

**THE UPSHOT:** A fast way to deal with old electronics that keeps your conscience clean and might give you a bit of extra money.

**THE DOWNSIDE:** The EcoATM's quote probably won't match what you can get for your item on eBay. On the other hand, you avoid eBay's seller fees. You have to physically go to the ATM. It's a big machine, about twice the size of a regular drugstore ATM. It has a lot of

complicated moving parts, and could be prone to breakage.

**AVAILABILITY:** There are about fifty of them deployed right now, mostly in grocery stores and malls in California. The San Diego-based company behind the machine says it plans to have about 500 out at the end of this year, spreading eastward.

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