COMMUNITY

Local man turns old computers into cash crop

By LISA RAINFORD
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First it outgrew his parents' house.

Soon, there was little room in the basement of a video rental store at the corner of Bloor and Jane Streets to accommodate the computer monitors, keyboards, hard drives and printers that had piled up.

Since it's inception in October of 2001, the computer recycling and repair business established by local resident Dennis Maslo, has had to expand once again taking over the basement of what used to be a bank next door.

Now, says Maslo, he's got the much-needed extra space as well as his own vault. He's not exactly sure what ultimately he'll use it for, but right now it provides a secure spot for storing machines that have come from such places as law firms, for example, that still have confidential files on them.

"I had no idea that picking up a computer in an elevator would lead to this," Maslo said, referring to the day he decided to refurbish a discarded, but still operational computer he found at the downtown Toronto office where he once worked.

There is no shortage of people interested in refurbished goods, he has discovered. There is no such thing as a typical day in his line of work, he said.

Maslo's mission, when he decided to start refurbishing and re-selling computers, was to divert them from landfill. Computation, as it is called, now specializes in three main areas. Not only recycling, but also IT services and refurbishing.

"We divert everything - 100 percent from landfill. If we can help people use computers more effectively, there's less reason for them to say 'I've had it with this machine' and ditch it," he said.

If you've ever been frustrated by your computer, tired of being harassed by the latest virus or wished you didn't have to pay an arm and a leg for software you need — without stealing it, Maslo jokes, Computation is offering a computer tips, tricks and maintenance seminar early next month. It's being held at St. Olave's Church,

360 Windermere Ave., just south of Bloor Street West. Maslo and his colleagues will provide an easy-to-follow roadmap for keeping your computer in top form.

Topics include preventing and getting rid of virus, spyware and adware infections, provide links to cutting edge free software and show how to update Windows and perform some basic hardware maintenance. They'll also show how to kid-proof and securely store important files and data.

From June 13 to 19th, Computation is also hosting a recycling event for people who need to get rid of unwanted computer equipment for recycling (there is a limit of two systems per household).

Drop off is also available to the store at 2444 Bloor St. West from noon until 9 p.m. seven days a week. Pick-up can be arranged.

"It's a win-win," Maslo said. "People want to get rid of it and we have the skills to deal with it and pass it on to others."

For information, contact 416-910-4358 or log onto www.computation.to