

16 Ways to Repurpose Your Old Gadgets

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Time to make use of that gadget graveyard in your closet and repurpose that out-of-date tech.

Tech is constantly being outdated. Because of that, you might have a small gadget graveyard built up in your house. You spent a decent amount of money on all that stuff. It shouldn't go to waste! So before you get rid of it, let's go over some cool things you can do with those dated pieces of tech.

Computers: There's Still Life Left in It

Whether it's an old Windows desktop or an out-of-date Macbook, you might have a computer or two collecting dust in your closet. And while dated specs may make them difficult to use nowadays, there are a few things you can still use them for.

- Turn it into a Chromebook: There is a way to squeeze some life and performance out of your old laptop or desktop before it finally dies out: Install ChromiumOS on it. ChromiumOS is the open-source version of Google's Chrome OS, and it's a less intensive operating system than something like Windows. While Chromium OS can't do everything more complicated operating systems can, for most people it's a more than fine replacement.
- A Laptop as a Secondary Monitor: If you've got a Windows PC and a Windows laptop, you can wirelessly connect them so that the laptop can serve as a monitor to the PC. Having two monitors is always nice, and this is a simple way to add on to your current setup without dropping more money on a new monitor. Be aware this is a wireless connection, so there can be some delay.
- Turn it into a Plex Machine: Plex is a great service for watching your digital copies of movies and shows anywhere. The thing is, you need a central server for your library to live on. Fortunately, the software for creating such a server is available for Mac and Windows, so the process of turning your old computer into a Plex server is fairly simple.
- Turn a Broken Screen Laptop into a Desktop: A laptop with a broken screen can feel useless. However, there's a simple way you can get more use out of it---just use it as a desktop. Buy an external monitor (or salvage an old one) and you're good to go. You might need to purchase a USB hub with an HDMI port for this to work though.
- Your Old Case is a Useful Box: Your dusty old PC may barely boot nowadays, but if you tear out all of the internal hardware then the actual case can be surprisingly useful. At the end of the day, most PC cases are just big boxes, and there's a lot you can do with an empty box from a geeky mailbox to a unique shelving unit.

Phones: That Camera is Still Good

While an old phone is the opposite of fun to use (especially on the Android side of things), there are some things you can do with their cameras---even if the cameras aren't good.

- **Use it as a Dashcam:** A dashcam is an invaluable thing for drivers to have installed, but the price barrier and setup process can make it a difficult sell. But with a [simple phone dock](#) and a [car charger](#), you can easily turn your old phone into a functional dashcam. Just be prepared to delete the video files off your phone regularly to free up space.
- Use it as a Webcam: Webcams are a rare commodity nowadays, but it's pretty simple to turn your phone into a wireless webcam. The app EposCam is great for this, and is available on iOS. Android users can make use of iVCam Webcam. You'll probably also want a tripod for your phone for a simpler setup.

Tablets: Turn Them Into Appliances

Your old tablet may take a long time to boot up, but that doesn't matter as much if it's only serving one purpose.

- Dedicated Weather Station (Android/iOS): While a tablet may slow down over the years, you don't exactly need a lot of power to check the weather. You can set your tablet up with a kickstand and a charger, and keep your weather app of choice open at all times. With the added benefit of virtual assistants, this is a great way to keep up with the weather.
- Dedicated Calendar (Android/iOS) and To-Do Station: Forget wall calendars and notebooks, you can easily turn your tablet into a dedicated scheduling/productivity station in a similar manner to the weather station. Just install your calendar and to-do apps of choice, and set up your tablet with a kickstand and charger.

- **Recipe Machine:** Another simple option, but keeping a tablet in the kitchen just for recipes is really useful. It's also nice to have something more disposable take this place than the phone or tablet you use every day.
- **SmartHome Hub (Android/iOS):** If you're heavily invested in the world of smart homes you're going to need a place to manage all of your smart devices. And old tablets are great for this as devices like the Amazon Echo and Google Home have companion apps for tablets. Apple also fully supports the iPad to act as a Home Hub.

Consoles: Homebrew It!

While game consoles may appear as restricted pieces of tech at first glance, there are some bonus ways to make use of them nowadays besides playing their respective libraries of games.

- **Homebrewing:** This refers to flashing ROMs of various games digitally to a console's memory. The process is wildly different for every console, and as such the difficulty level is also varied. The Wii (and by extension, Wii U) is one the simplest consoles to Homebrew, so if you've got one of those lying around start there. Besides that, your mileage will vary, depending on the systems you have available to you---research will be key here.
- **Use it as a Media Center:** Your old Xbox 360 and Playstation 3 may be more useful than you think. Both of these systems can read DVDs (the PS3 can even read Blu-Rays), but they also have access to apps like Netflix (Xbox 360/PS3) and Hulu (Xbox 360/PS3). The online stores for both of these are still up, so it's as simple as downloading the app and signing in. Despite their age, these systems are still fully viable media centers today.

Miscellaneous: All The Rest

Here are the projects that don't fit into any of the categories above. That doesn't mean you should discount them though, they're still pretty cool.

- **Cameras as Webcams:** Many digital cameras can serve as webcams with a simple cord, but for high-end DSLR cameras the process can be more complicated. Fortunately, Sony, Panasonic, and Canon have all released software that makes it relatively simple to set up your fancy camera as a high-end webcam.
- **Add Bluetooth to Your iPod Dock:** Did you buy a dock for your old iPod so that you could listen to tunes loud and clear? Chances are, it's not getting much use nowadays, but it can still prove useful. Through an adapter from ZIUCOM, you can add Bluetooth functionality to your old iPod dock and use it the same way you would use any standard Bluetooth speaker.
- **Turn an Old Monitor into a Smart Mirror:** Why limit your mirror to only show yourself when you look at it? With a smart mirror, you could see the time, weather, and news all while getting ready for work. This is a DIY project you'll have to spend some time on, and depending on how fancy you get with the frame it can be quite expensive, but the results will be well worth it.