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## Greenpeace turns its sights to laptops

### Names and shames the naughty ones

by Amy-Mae Elliott published on 26 October 2007

After grabbing headlines with their recent attack on Apple, and in particular the iPhone, Greenpeace has released another statement about consumer electronics - this time focusing their attentions on laptops.

The Greenpeace investigation into hazardous materials in laptop computers says that although manufacturers have phased out use of some of the most toxic materials over the past year there's still "a long way to go" in eliminating others, such as PVC and brominated flame retardants (BFRs) and phthalates.

Greenpeace purchased 18 laptops representing six different brands in 14 countries in Europe, in North and South America and Asia and sent them for analysis by an independent laboratory in Denmark and at the Greenpeace Research Laboratories at Exeter University, in the UK.

The results of the analysis, contained in the report, "Toxic chemicals in computers - Reloaded", show bromine being present in over 40% of the components tested. Of the components tested, Sony laptops were found to have the lowest number containing bromine, Dell laptops had the highest number.

PVC was found in 44% of all plastic coating of internal wires and external cables that were tested. Phthalates were found in the power cables supplied with all laptops, with the highest levels in those of Acer and HP laptops.

"While levels of certain toxic chemicals in the laptop components tested do not exceed current European standards, other hazardous chemicals found in laptops are not yet covered by European regulations", said Zeina Alhajj, Greenpeace International toxics campaigner.

"Greenpeace's goal is for computer



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manufacturers to eliminate the use of toxic materials completely."

Greenpeace says the analysis shows that, for almost every component found to contain either bromine or plastic PVC, an equivalent component free of these chemicals can be found in another laptop.

"In theory, by combining components from different machines, the industry could already almost produce the first toxic-free computer", said AlHajj. "The question is, which company is going to be the first to go the whole way."