Part 2: 2026 Predictions for ITAD and Electronics Recycling: Differentiation, Indigestion, and the End of Commodity Assumptions

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As the ITAD and electronics recycling sectors move into 2026, the outlook is about how structural change will be uneven and how its consequences will be absorbed. In continuation with 2025, elevated asset volumes continue to move through the system, yet the conditions under which those assets can be processed, insured, reported, and monetized have narrowed significantly.

The market is already showing signs of stress at the edges. Commodity endpoint devices are losing resale support, compliance and insurance costs are rising, and buyer expectations around security, battery handling, and auditability are tightening faster than most operating models can adjust. At the same time, pockets of the market, particularly AI infrastructure, data-center decommissioning, and specialized reuse, are exhibiting pricing power and scarcity dynamics.

The full 2026 outlook examines where these pressures are already visible, where early signals are forming, and how they are likely to reshape competitive positioning across ITAD providers, OEM programs, and large asset lifecycle platforms. It also outlines why we expect 2026 to be less about demand and more about eligibility, as fewer operators remain structurally compatible with enterprise, insurer, and audit requirements.

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