Analyst Opinion: Enterprise Hardware Circularity Trends as of Mid-October 2026

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A series of developments across healthcare, financial services, telecommunications and enterprise computing points to changes in how organizations manage their technology assets. Corporate consolidation is reshaping service relationships, hardware costs are influencing replacement decisions, and new computing architectures are introducing equipment that requires specialized handling.

For the IT asset disposition (ITAD) and electronics recycling industries, these developments deserve close attention. They also require us to reconsider some longstanding assumptions about where equipment recovery opportunities originate and how hardware retains value after its initial deployment.

Enterprise asset decisions are becoming more complex

One development worth watching is the growing role of specialized service providers in enterprise technology management. The proposed Brink’s acquisition of NCR Atleos provides an example. The transaction would combine substantial ATM infrastructure operations, while the expansion of ATM-as-a-Service illustrates how financial institutions are relying on outside companies to manage equipment.

A similar development is visible in healthcare. Parkview Health’s proposed acquisition of Ovation Healthcare involves a shared-services organization supporting more than 500 healthcare entities. Ovation already provides device lifecycle management and technology procurement services.

For ITAD providers, these arrangements raise an important commercial question: who has the authority to retire equipment and select recovery contractors? The answer increasingly requires understanding the relationships between enterprise asset owners and the organizations managing their technology.

Hardware replacement economics are shifting

The sharp increase in memory and storage costs is affecting both the PC and smartphone markets. Research firms reported declines of approximately 20% in global PC and smartphone shipments during the third quarter of 2026. Meanwhile, enterprises operating Windows 10 face a second year of Microsoft’s Extended Security Updates program, with standard commercial pricing reaching 122 dollars per device.

These developments complicate replacement decisions. Higher hardware acquisition costs can encourage organizations to retain functioning equipment longer, even as software support becomes more expensive.

For ITAD providers, I see a potential consequence in the timing of equipment returns. Longer retention periods could delay incoming inventory, while demand for reliable refurbished hardware could support resale opportunities for selected models.

The outcome will depend on actual enterprise purchasing and replacement decisions. Lower new-device shipments do not automatically translate into higher refurbished sales.

AI infrastructure creates a different recovery challenge

NVIDIA’s Blackwell rack-scale computing platforms illustrate another development with longer-term consequences. Systems such as the GB200 NVL72 combine 72 GPUs with 36 CPUs in integrated, liquid-cooled configurations. Their architecture presents a different equipment recovery proposition from conventional enterprise servers.

When these systems eventually enter secondary markets, recovery providers will need to assess whether complete racks can be redeployed economically. Individual compute assemblies could have value within compatible installations, depending on available buyers.

Specialized testing and technical familiarity could become important competitive capabilities. We still lack sufficient public transaction evidence to establish the resale economics of used Blackwell racks, so I would be cautious about assigning future values based on conventional server markets.

Retirement does not guarantee recovery

Two other developments illustrate the need to distinguish equipment retirement from physical material availability. U.S. telecommunications carriers are retiring legacy copper networks, but cables can remain installed after services are discontinued. Actual copper recovery depends on removal projects and the economics of extracting the material.

Federal cybersecurity requirements present a related issue. CISA has established deadlines for retiring unsupported network edge devices, including switches and routers. Those deadlines identify equipment that must leave covered operating environments, but federal property procedures determine its subsequent disposition.

Both developments offer legitimate subjects for commercial investigation. Neither provides sufficient evidence to forecast recycling volumes.

My outlook

I believe the hardware circularity industry is entering a period in which access to equipment and the ability to assess its remaining value will become increasingly important competitive considerations. Enterprise customers will continue making replacement decisions based on their operating requirements and technology budgets. Some will extend equipment life, while others will move toward newer infrastructure.

For ITAD executives, the business-development priority is to understand those decisions early enough to participate in the resulting equipment programs. For recyclers, the priority is securing reliable information about actual material releases. The opportunities are identifiable, but their commercial value must be established through real equipment flows and contracts. That is where I expect the next phase of enterprise hardware circularity to take shape.

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