



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Floppy Disks Get Second Life at Recycling Service

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Do you know the “save” **icon** on your computer? It is a picture of a floppy disk. Back in the 1900s, they were the main way computer files were saved and stored. Back then, there were no USB flash drives and there was no cloud-based storage.

Today, floppy disks are hard to find. And demand for them is rising.

Tom Persky runs the website floppydisk.com, a seller of the well-known **palm-sized** floppy disk. The 73-year-old says business is growing. The California-based business **recycles** new and used disks, removes the information stored on them and sells them to a dependable customer base. He estimates that he sells about 500 disks a day.

So, who buys floppy disks in the year 2022? Persky says there are many kinds of people who make such purchases. They include people who work in the **embroidery** industry and in the airline industry.

"If you built a plane 20 or 30 or even 40 years ago, you would use a floppy disk to get information in and out of some of the **avionics** of that airplane," Persky said.

At his **warehouse**, there are huge numbers of colorful disks - bright green, orange, yellow - sent from around the world. He uses a large magnetic machine with a **conveyor belt** to remove the information from the disks, and then another machine puts written information on them.

His warehouse even has older versions of floppy disks that were used in the 1970s and 1980s. One even is **labeled** with the 1960 John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon U.S. presidential debate.

Despite being “the dinosaurs” of the tech world, Persky said floppy disks still have some good qualities.

"Floppy disks are very **reliable**, very **stable**, a very well understood way to get information in and out of a machine," he said.

Persky went into the floppy disk business after working for a tax company in the 1990s doing software development. He used to make copies of the software on floppy disks. After that, he said that he fell in love with the floppy disk business.

He was not expecting his business to last as long as it did.

"When I see the 'save' icon, I see a floppy disk. But most people just see the 'save' icon," Persky said. "I'll be here for as long as people continue to want to have these disks. But it's not forever."

I'm Faith Pirlo.

Phil Lavelle wrote this article for Reuters. Faith Pirlo adapted it for Learning English.

Words in This Story

icon – *n.* a small picture or design on a computer screen that represents a program or function

palm-sized – *adj.* fits in the palm or middle of your hand

recycle – *v.* to put used paper, glass, plastic, etc. through a process so that it can be used again

embroidery – *n.* cloth with special designs made using a small, very thin object that is used in sewing and that has a sharp point at one end and a hole for a long, thin piece of cotton, silk or other material

avionics – *n.* a blend word meaning aviation and technology or the plane's technology

warehouse – *n.* a place where goods are stored

conveyor belt – *n.* a mechanical apparatus for moving articles or bulk material from place to place

label – *v.* a slip (as of paper or cloth) inscribed and affixed to something for identification or description

reliable – *adj.* able to be depended upon to do something

stable – *adj.* not likely to change or end suddenly
