

Bitcoin mining generates substantial electronic waste: study

September 17 2021



Bitcoin mining generated 30,700 tonnes of electronic waste in the 12 months to May, a study found.

Mining for bitcoin generates substantial electronic waste that "represents a growing threat to the environment", according to a recent study.

A co-author of the report told AFP on Friday that the average life cycle of the powerful computers used to unearth the units of the world's leading cryptocurrency was only 1.3 years.

Alex de Vries noted that this was "extremely short compared to any" other electronic devices such as iPhones.

At 30,700 tonnes, the amount of electronic [waste](#) generated by bitcoin mining in the 12 months to May was "comparable to the amount of small IT and telecommunication equipment waste produced by a country like the Netherlands", the report said.

The race to find new bitcoins—on Friday, one unit was worth more than \$47,000 following a stellar rise this year—means the mining computers' processing power soon becomes obsolete.

And the more bitcoin is worth, the larger the amount of electronic waste, according to the study published by [scientific journal](#), Elsevier.

Alex de Vries works as an economist at the Dutch [central bank](#), while the report's co-author Christian Stoll is from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Despite the high amount of waste, it remains a fraction of the global total from throwing away [electronic devices](#), which stood at 53.6 million tonnes last year.

© 2021 AFP

Citation: Bitcoin mining generates substantial electronic waste: study (2021, September 17) retrieved 20 April 2024 from

<https://techxplore.com/news/2021-09-bitcoin-substantial-electronic.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.