



Everyday around 3:00 I waste a lot of paper...I would actually say that my daily paper binge is one of the most wasteful things that I do. Am I just some sort of weirdo that gets his jollies destroying paper? Nope, I'm just like you...just checking my mail. I'm not sure what the average is but, I did a highly unscientific survey of my mail box over the past few days and found that 60% of the mail I received was unsolicited junk mail that went straight from my box to the recycling bin.

I have never heard someone say that they actually look forward to the junk mail they get everyday. Few people proclaim the benefits of such mail with most people being complacent about it and accepting it as part of the normal mail system. It is hard to imagine the amount of waste in the landfills this junk mail generates, especially considering that few people recycle it.

I think that a project to eliminate junk mail could be very successful because there is already a general dislike for it which could be turned into action provided that the actual action was not too difficult for an individual to do. I see junk mail as a two part problem. First you would have to address the mail that ends up in the mail box, and second you should try to address the source and not get the mail sent in the first place.

I am guessing that the majority of junk mail ends up in the landfill and not the recycling place. While recycling the junk mail is not the complete answer, if we could get more people to recycle, then it would be a great step in solving the problem. To do this, I think that we should design new multislot mailboxes with built in recycling bins.



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In addition, it would be great to design recycling bin attachments that would be able to be installed on the standard multislot mail boxes. This would be extremely convenient for people checking their mail as they could recycle their junk mail straight from the box. It would take a bit of negotiating with recycling companies for pickup but could easily be implemented into existing recycling pickup programs. This program would be implemented on the city scale. I think that San Luis Obispo is a progressive enough city with enough multislot mailboxes that we could be a test pilot for the program.

While the recycling bins would be a great start, they don't address the people who have individual mail boxes, and it doesn't attack the problem at the source. The second part of my plan would require a more national effort and most likely raise a lot more protest.

I think that it would be a wonderful idea to increase bulk mailing rates. This would make it less economical to send out junk mail on massive scales and would hopefully reduce the amount of mail we receive everyday. Extra revenues generated from this postal increase could be used to fund new mail boxes and recycling pickup. I am guessing that this would receive major opposition from big business, especially credit card companies who are a major purveyor of junk mail. This could be a huge problem considering that many of our politicians (including out president) are puppets to big business.

For some reason, a lot of people tend to oppose programs that are intended to help the environment. I think that attacking something like junk mail which is already largely hated could be greatly successful.

