

The Sorting of Pens

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Concerns and Benefits

Ethical Concerns:

The sorting of pens does not have any ethical concerns as it does not quite really have any ethical issues. This fairly simple machine just slots pens according to the color it writes out when written on a piece of paper. Perhaps, an ethical concern could be the use of paper to test these pens but such paper can be just scratch sheets of paper or recycled paper so that would not result in too many problems.

Economic Concerns and Benefits:

A pen sorting device as such would greatly reduce costs of back to school shopping. Within the past few years, the costs for back-to-school supplies have greatly increased. This jump of 87.5% from 2015, merely 3 years ago indicates that people are more than willing to splurge money in order to get supplies quicker. And that between 2007 and 2017, prices for school supplies rose by an estimated \$10. However, many people are reusing these school supplies. The main issue with this is that people have to spend extensive periods of time in order to find these supplies and end up caving in and buying them for the sake of time. Retail sales of pens in the United States in 2015, through Nov. 28, were up 5 percent in dollars and 4 percent in the number of units sold, according to NPD Group. This large retention rate and increase of pen sales indicates to us that the influence pen companies have is extremely widespread and the large amounts of revenue they generate from the consumers that buy their products is an extremely profitable business. The sales of stationary such as pens are not only limited to physical markets or businesses. Businesses that sell these pieces of stationary online also achieve a fair amount of profit. Commercial marketing has grown this year comes on top of a strong year in 2016, making

it that much more impressive. Younger consumers that shop in preparation for going back to high school and college actually prefer shopping online, so ecommerce growth should continue for the foreseeable future. This appeal by the online shopping also indicates the necessity of a pen sorter to conserve money within a growing business of stationary.

Environmental Concerns and Benefits:

Complete pens can't go into normal plastic recycling bins because they contain bits of metal, as well as the remainder of the ink. The barrels themselves are typically "Type 5 recyclable plastic," according to Pilot, but all metal components and the refills have to be removed before recycling. So, even if you disassembled every pen you use, you would still be left with a pile of clips, plungers, springs, barrel rings, screw-on tips, and refills. In a landfill, plastic items give off toxic gases like dioxins. Also, pen refills contain pollutants including volatile substances, ink and plastics that cannot fully break down if not recycled. Without the recycling of pens, the situation of pens would make the pollution and waste situations around the world even worse. And even though pens are small, they can add up fast when you figure that billions of them are manufactured every single year. Even the slightest conservation efforts could generate a benefit for yourself and the rest of the world.

Possible Opposition:

Many companies depend on these back to school sales to sell their items. In doing so, they encourage people to buy their products rather than save money and not buy their products. Of course, this would mean that they would be opposed to this idea mainly for their own financial benefit. However, pen sorting could ultimately save consumers lots of money by reusing pens instead of buying new ones. Pens are a small, everyday item you might not think

about recycling. French pen manufacturer Bic sells 8.76 billion stationary items (pens, pencils, markers, correction tools and paper products) every year. The companies that make these large amounts of pens and other similar items would take a hefty hit to their business if a pen sorter was realized and frequently use.

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