

Food delivery apps are drowning China in plastic

Notes & Cues:**Article:**

The astronomical growth of food delivery apps in China is flooding the country with takeout containers and bags. And the vast majority of this plastic ends up discarded, buried or burned with the rest of the trash, researchers and recyclers say.

Scientists estimate that the online takeout business in China was responsible for 1.6 million tons of packaging waste in 2017. The total for 2018 grew to an estimated two million tons.

For many overworked or merely lazy people in urban China, the leading takeout platforms Meituan and Ele.me are replacing cooking or eating out as the preferred means of obtaining nourishment.

“Meituan is deeply committed to reducing the environmental impact of food delivery, ” the company said in a statement, pointing to initiatives such as allowing users to choose not to receive disposable tableware.

Around the world, the convenience of such services comes with costs that can be easy to overlook. Labor controversies, for instance. Or roads made more hazardous by takeout couriers zooming around on motorbikes. Plastic waste is just as easily ignored, even when it is being generated and mismanaged on a titanic scale.

Summary: