

How to stop delivery of telephone books

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20031231-00

December 31, 2003



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Like many of you (I suspect), I don't use the paper telephone book. If I want to look something up, I go online. Yet every year I get a dozen different telephone books. I don't like them because a telephone book sitting on my front porch screams, "Rob this house! Nobody's home!" Besides, it's a waste of paper. So for the past few years I've been trying to stop delivery of all the telephone books. It's harder than you think. The first hurdle is figuring out what the "please take me off your mailing list" number is. Because they sure don't advertise it. I've discovered that the best way to get through to somebody who can take you off the list is to call the "How to order more copies of this wonderful telephone directory." Note: WorldPages added another wrinkle to the procedure. You see, **they misprinted their own telephone number**. Why anybody would voluntarily pay money to be listed by a **telephone directory company that can't even get their own phone number right** is beyond me. You have to be polite but firm when dealing with these people. Qwest is particularly tricky. I had called last year to stop delivery of all three of their phone books (they have three!), but in June another one showed up. I called them and they confirmed, "Yes, I see that we have a zero on your account, I don't know what happened. Let me try again." **Aside:** Why does Qwest want my telephone **number** to stop **delivery** of my telephone book? They deliver the book to a house, not to a telephone. Anyway, so that seems to keep the telephone book delivery gnomes at bay, until December, when yet another Qwest telephone book arrives at my doorstep. So I call again. "Yes, we have you marked as 'do not deliver'." "So why did I get one?" "This wasn't one of our standard phone books. This was a promotional phone book." Aha, so when you say "Do not deliver" it doesn't actually mean, "Do not deliver." It just means "Don't deliver the one that I am specifically complaining about." But there's this double-secret phone book delivery list that you have to specifically ask to be removed from, and we're not going to tell you about it until you ask. "Please remove me from the promotional phone book delivery list as well." "I'm sorry, I can't do that. There is no way for us to enter that in our computers." Always blame the computers. One response to "Our computer can't do that" I haven't yet resorted to is "Well, then I guess you'll have to do it by hand.") "Who delivers the promotional phone books?" "We contract that out to a local delivery company." "Can I talk to them?" "Hang on a second." <wait> "Okay, I can fill out a form so you don't receive promotional phone books either." (Aha, so she **is** going to do it by hand.) "Thank you. Good-bye."

We'll see how long this lasts. I predict May.

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