

Peter Wilson

*Postal Pods*

Some small businesses in Colorado Springs need a place to receive mail such as Postal Annex. When a customer receives a package, an employee sends the customer a text message informing them that a package is available for pick up. However, when normal mail arrives employees do not send a text message because it is too time intensive. Sending text messages for normal mail using current methods costs too much in additional labor. Customers are not aware when normal mail arrives in their postal box. This causes two problems: 1) Customers arrive at Postal Annex only to find an empty box, and 2) A customer delays checking their box while important mail has arrived. My solution is to provide a cost effective and less time intensive way for an employee to send a text message to the customer when normal mail arrives. I accomplish this by placing a wireless button in each mailbox that is pressed each time an employee places mail in the box. The button sends a message over a wireless network with a unique MAC address that is detected by a program running on a Raspberry Pi computer. My program processes the message, looks up the customer phone number, and sends an email to an email-to-text-message gateway based on the customer's mobile carrier. A text message is then received by the customer on their mobile device. My solution is worthwhile because it provides a way for postal businesses to deliver higher levels of customer satisfaction. Customers no longer must come to their mailbox only to find no mail, and important mail can be immediately collected. Postal businesses can also gain profit by charging additional fees for the service.