

Environmental News
EPA RECOGNIZES WINNERS OF DESIGNS FOR
SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING OF E-PRODUCTS

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EPA, in partnership with McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry (MBDC), today announced the two winners of the "Cradle to Cradle Design Challenge for E-Commerce Shipping Packaging and Logistics" at the PackExpo Trade Show in Las Vegas. Both winners identified innovative packaging and design solutions to reducing the environmental impacts associated with shipping books purchased online. They created packaging that can be reused, recycled or composted, considering all materials as nutrients for technical or biological systems.

"The Design Challenge has shown us that the door is wide open for exploring, identifying and developing innovative and environmentally sound packaging solutions," said Marianne Horinko, Acting Administrator for the EPA. "We look forward to the packaging industry implementing these tangible solutions."

The winning professional entry represents a collaborative effort between Microsoft (Washington state), Allen Schluger Company and Shorewood Packaging (New York). The designers created a "Bevelope" with 100 percent post-consumer content paperboard. The unique design of the product allows it to expand or contract. The packaging can accommodate the slimmest paperback book or the thickest manual and collapses quickly after use. It can be stored for reuse or recycled with mixed paper. Companies can print labels directly onto the Bevelope, eliminating stickers that contaminate the recycling stream.

A team from the Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, Calif. produced the winning entry in the student category called "KNF (Keep it Nature Friendly)." The students combined kenaf, a relatively new material, with the traditional concept of the Japanese Furoshiki, a traditional method of wrapping that dates back to the 8th century. The design placed adjustable, protective corners around any sized book and then the entire product is wrapped. The paper and corners are made from a plant called kenaf, that has several environmental advantages over trees as a source of paper. After the customer receives the package, the wrapping materials are given a second life. Consumers can compost the kenaf corners and wrapping paper. A bookmark is included in the package that contains kenaf seeds with instructions on how to assemble the corner protectors into a pot for sprouting the seeds.

EPA also presented four "Recognition of Innovation" awards to designers from Clean Agency, Calif., GrowDesign, Penn., Guilford Technical Community College, N.C., and Montreal University, Canada. Teams from these companies and institutions produced innovative packaging that captured the spirit of the design challenge.

The E-Commerce Design Challenge is one of EPA's Innovation Pilots. The goal of the Innovation Pilots is to test creative ideas and approaches including recycling, waste minimization and energy recovery. To date, EPA has selected 31 innovation pilots totaling \$1.3 million in awards.

Launched in April, EPA's Cradle to Cradle Design Challenge attracted more than a thousand people to its web site; entries were submitted by students, packaging and industrial designers, and manufacturers from North America and Europe. The E-Commerce Design Challenge was selected because of the critical role product design can play in addressing environmental issues. The challenge asked participants to rethink and redesign e-commerce shipping packaging and logistics based on cradle-to-cradle life cycles. Participants challenged traditional manufacturing systems that are based on a one-way, cradle-to-grave stream of materials.

EPA's partner MBDC is located in Charlottesville, Va. MBDC is a product and process design firm established by William McDonough and chemist Dr. Michael Braungart in 1995. It provides environmentally intelligent product research and development, design and business tools to companies of all sizes.

For more information, go to: <http://www.epa.gov/oswer/docs/iwg/cradle.pdf> or <http://www.mbdc.com/challenge>

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