



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2005 PROJECT SUMMARY**

Name(s) Ryan J. Nowicki	Project Number J1716
Project Title Project Payphone	
<p style="text-align: center;">Abstract</p> <p>Objectives/Goals The objective is to determine if and why people answer ringing public payphones. I believe that people will only answer if they are attempting to use the phone and find it ringing.</p> <p>Methods/Materials Three payphone locations were selected after observing and testing nearly 20 different locations. Most payphone locations were eliminated because the phone either did not ring, there wasn't enough foot traffic or the ring could not be heard by people passing by. A hidden video camera was mounted inside of a car parked nearby the payphone so that conversations and passersby could be recorded. A cell phone with a speakerphone was used to call the payphone from inside the car and record the conversation. The percentage of people picking up, reason for answering and age/sex of person answering was recorded.</p> <p>Results Several hundred people were observed passing by each of three different payphones on several different days. One payphone had a 10% pick-up rate for people that were passing by. The other two phones had less than a 2% pick-up rate. More men answered than women and the age of people answering was fairly well distributed. Although there were many different reasons for picking up the phone, the predominant reason (85% of the time) was that people were just curious to know who was on the other side of the phone.</p> <p>Conclusions/Discussion My overall conclusion is that people do in fact still answer ringing payphones, however, not very often. Even with the most popular payphones, the pick-up rate is less than 10%. When people do answer payphones, the most common reason (85%) is that they are just curious to see who is calling. This result does not support my hypothesis. In fact, only 2% of the people that answered did it because they wanted to use the phone (my hypothesis). This overall result suggests the notion that payphones are a dying breed. It appears that cell phones have taken their place to a large extent. Many people that still use payphones appear not to have a cell phone. And finally, many people that answer ringing payphones appear to be people that are just hanging around and not in a particular hurry.</p>	
Summary Statement Project Payphone is a social science experiment to determine if and why people answer ringing payphones in busy, public areas.	
Help Received Father helped with video taping, driving me to payphone locations and showed me how to use video editing software; My teacher helped me to prepare my observations; Mother helped me to purchase a mini payphone; Grandma taught me how to print out large fonts.	