
To mail or not to mail That is the Question

That question, it seems, is being asked by a larger and larger number of rock clubs. In the last two weeks I have had one newsletter editor tell me that they are going to stop sending out exchange newsletters, another is going to start send a newsletter out every three months, and one that is not going to mail newsletters at all, all for the same reason, the cost of postage. I do not want to see exchange newsletters become a thing of the past, nor does the rockhound community. They are too valuable a resource to be lost.

I think there is a solution that can be utilized by most if not all clubs. Why not send your newsletter by e-mail?

We e-mailed just under half of our January 2003 newsletter, and I have already received two e-mail exchange newsletters back from other clubs who think the idea is great.

My club purchased Adobe Acrobat 5 which we use to converts our newsletter into a .pdf file. The advantage of a .pdf file is that it converts any program into a format that can be read with the free Adobe Acrobat Reader which comes installed on most computers. Any web site you visit that has downloadable information, the information is in .pdf format and there is a link to the free reader. Web sites use the .pdf format because the information they provide cannot be altered, there by safeguarding their information. My club uses MS Publisher to produce our newsletter, other clubs use MS Word. The Adobe Acrobat 5 program will convert both programs including graphics into the .pdf format.

We estimate that we will pay for the program in 16 months on just the postage savings. An easier way to figure the cost of the program is, it works out to about 550 newsletters, e-mailed rather than mailed, to pay for the program, that's at .37 cents per newsletter, right now. How many newsletters do you mail right now? How many do the Federations mail each month?

What are the pros and cons of sending your newsletter as an e-mail vs. mailing?

On the plus side:

- 1> Your newsletters arrive in one piece, no torn pages, no plastic sacks from the Post Office (for the newsletters in pieces). We had three of those in one month.**
- 2> For most clubs initially they would probably save slightly less than half of their postage alone. This doesn't include printer supplier, paper, etc.**
- 3> The newsletters don't get lost.**
- 4> They arrive sooner.**
- 5> They can be saved on your home computer for future reference.**
- 6> The information cannot be changed or tampered with in the .pdf format.**

On the minus side:

- 1> The cost of the Adobe Acrobat 5 program. We purchased our copy for just over \$200. Go to any of the office supply stores and it will cost you \$250.
- 2> Some large clubs, like the Federations, mail using a bulk rate. This could affect them.
- 3> You will still have to mail some of your newsletters.

For further information visit the following web sites:

The Adobe Acrobat web site at:

<http://www.adobe.com>

For software buying web sites look at:

<http://www.pricegrabber.com>

<http://www.pricescan.com>

<http://www.price.com>

These all compare prices from different outlets. The one we chose had no tax and free shipping.

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