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## Now 'Junk' Callers Want Your Ear

**I**T HAS BEEN observed that a sort of immortality may be achieved simply by getting one's name on a commercial mailing list.

This generally is much easier to do than to get one's name off such a list. In fact, nearly everybody with a name and address is on somebody's list, perhaps more than once. Even unknowns receive mail addressed to "Occupant" or "Resident".

It might logically be assumed that a person's name is private property, but names aren't treated that way. Once a name is on a mailing list, it may be bought, sold or traded.

Names of those people who have bought subscriptions, ordered merchandise or donated to "worthy causes" by mail are valued highly as prospects. They might buy or give by mail again.

Some people enjoy receiving catalogs and brochures, while others toss them into wastebaskets with hardly a glance. A number refer to solicitations as "junk mail".

Now, similar complaints about "junk phone calls" are being voiced by persons who resent answering their phones to respond to sales pitches for merchandise or services, for such things as ticket drives by charitable organizations, or surveys inquiring into their personal views or habits. Objections have been made about debt collectors calling, too, but whether these could be classified as "junk calls" might depend on remittances.

An Associated Press story recently reported that it is possible for telephone solicitors to buy or sell their lists of prospects, as has been the custom with mailing lists. People whose names are on the lists may have nothing to say about it.

This prompted a Wisconsin congressman to announce that he would introduce legislation to "protect citizens from junk telephone calls," but he didn't say how.

Wide Area Telephone Service (WATS) has put phone prospects on nationwide circuits. Oklahomans

often receive solicitations from Florida or California, and now Hawaii and Alaska have been added to WATS lines!

Not much can be done to limit receipt of unwanted mail or undesired phone calls without interfering with our freedom of the press or freedom of speech. Only we as individuals really know which calls or letters we want to reach us. Even then, we might occasionally be mistaken.

Certainly, a federal agency wouldn't do a satisfactory job of selecting for us. The government already maintains 800 databanks in more than 50 agencies to keep track of many aspects of our lives. We don't need any more of these.

Solicitors now use tape recordings to make offers by phone and recipients may respond by using electronic devices to record messages. This might not eliminate the calls, but a recorder talking to a recorder certainly will depersonalize them!