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Imagine It: A Community Recycling Initiative

Nikolay Clark, Lindsay Giacalone, Saif Ratul

Recycling is a process known to prevent waste of possibly beneficial resources such as paper, glass, plastic, metals, textiles and even various electronics. With the advancement of technology nowadays, there is a significant amount of increase in technological waste. When we receive our new and glistening technology from the store, often times we do not perceive the wasteful process behind the manufacture of that object. For example, when we view the commercial for an Apple® product, we are captivated by the sleek and shiny view of the object, rather than how that product was created in some developing country where there is little to no environmental regulations. With a little background in the effect of technology's advancement on environment Lindsay Giacalone, Nikolay Clark, and Saif Ratul understood how important it was to raise awareness in a diverse campus like SUNY Geneseo. Though all three of them have a different inspiration for taking an environmental initiative, their goal brought them together. They all wanted to utilize a local recycling business and establish it throughout the Geneseo campus, thus the *Imagine It* recycling initiative came to life.

Living on a beach her entire life, Lindsay G. has been very conscious of the trash and waste spread along the shore as well as in the water. Though various efforts have been made to expand recycling initiatives and saving shorelines, the changes have been very small and in some situations unnoticeable. Soon enough, Lindsay was made aware of a phenomenon of the Glass Beach in California, which is a beach created so people could discard their glass objects legally. This idea affected Lindsay greatly, so she decided to raise awareness of proper recycling throughout the Geneseo campus.

Growing up in the Buffalo suburbs, Nikolay C.'s experience with recycling is very different than Lindsay's. Nikolay was not very aware of recycling

until he attended Geneseo. As a Geneseo student, Nikolay has been motivated in regards to the importance of giving back to the community. Being involved in multiple organizations on campus, he has had the chance to work with multiple departments throughout campus. Observing his surroundings at each department, Nikolay noticed that many departments had their own system of recycling objects such as printer toners and electronics. Being an accounting student, Nikolay realized that these multiple processes of recycling are very inefficient to these various departments as well as the college, and sought a way to help.

Growing up in Bangladesh, a developing country, and immigrating to the United States, a well-developed nation, Saif R.'s experience with recycling is very different than both of his peers. Saif has experienced both the positivity of technological advancement and the negative impacts left by the environmental pollution from technology. Upon arriving to SUNY Geneseo, he noticed that many departments were placing their electronic objects, especially used printer toners, into trash bins. Being a tech-geek and having knowledge of electronic wastes' effect on environment, Saif started to look for an alternative. He addressed this issue to multiple departments that could help with addressing the issue; however the responses Saif received were unsatisfactory. Saif took the challenge of working through the bureaucratic system on campus to expand the existing recycling program in SUNY Geneseo.

Living in the same residence hall during their freshmen year, Lindsay, Nikolay and Saif shared their passion for recycling initiatives on the Geneseo campus. Though they all have their personal reasons for creating one recycling system at Geneseo, their overall goal was the same: *to improve recycling efforts at Geneseo by establishing a unified system of recycling.* Their focus was to create a better recycling process for electronic

objects and printer toners that is available for the whole campus. On their process of finding a solution, they found that all the Toshiba and GEO recycling boxes were individual efforts and most were not supervised properly. Collaborating with and unifying the individual efforts of recycling was the challenge that Lindsay, Nikolay and Saif came across.

Nikolay and Saif have been a part of the Chi Alpha Epsilon National Honor Society (affiliated with Access Opportunity Programs) since their sophomore year. To fundraise, the Honor Society was partnered up with a local recycling company *Imagine It* based in Rochester, New York. Although the partnership with *Imagine It* organization and Chi Alpha Epsilon Honor Society has been in place for over ten years, it was extremely limited. Lindsay, Nikolay and Saif started to work on a plan to improve the recycling efforts at SUNY Geneseo and to expand the program. They divided the tasks and responsibilities to be efficient and contacted individuals from different departments who could help their cause.

Nikolay talked to Helena Nardell, the Chapter Advisor for Chi Alpha Epsilon to get needed information on *Imagine It* representatives and how to get in contact with the company. Lindsay reached out to the office of Chuck Reyes to find a way to work with the Geneseo Institution and its sustainability initiatives. Saif discussed with Laurie Fox from Computing and Information Technology on how to implement an *Imagine It* program in building and what to do about the Toshiba and GEO boxes. To communicate with Toshiba, they approached Rebecca Anchor from Purchasing and Central services. She was working on a new contract with Toshiba at the time and said that she will enquire about Toshiba's interest in doing the recycling. Ms. Anchor reported back to us that Toshiba did not want to do the recycling and is willing to work together with Chi Alpha Epsilon on a proper recycling initiative. To do so, *Imagine It* would have to replace all Toshiba and GEO boxes on campus. Nikolay and Helena Nardell approached Jeff Brown, the campus *Imagine It* representative to increase the locations of pickup areas. Lindsay, Nikolay and Saif had to count and analyze the number of boxes that was needed in each building and department.

Once the plan was in motion, they placed *Imagine It* recycling boxes throughout campus. However, the biggest challenge they faced was distinguishing their recycling program from many other individual programs that were floating throughout campus. Along with that, many individuals did not know about their initiative and the recycling program. Lindsay, Nikolay, and Saif never foresaw these challenges, so they did not know what to do. In order to find a solution, they contacted Chuck Reyes and explained the situation to him. Chuck Reyes agreed to send emails to every department explaining the *Imagine It* program, which helped to reduce the confusion. With Chuck Reyes's help, they were able to address their recycling initiative and distinguish the program from many others on campus. It took approximate three to five months for their recycling program to make a noticeable impact. Since 2010, their recycling program has grown larger, while providing much better services. An *Imagine It* representative comes to Geneseo campus once every three weeks to pick up all the recyclable objects.

This recycling initiative helped the Chi Alpha Epsilon National Honor Society to make an impact on campus, and fulfill their 'service' pillar and promote a Geneseo motto: 'Give back to the community.' The partnership with *Imagine It* recycling program has created a stronger relationship with our local community and provided the opportunity to create a sustainable environment. This also allows Geneseo to accomplish its sustainability component of the mission statement by empowering the students with a culture of sustainable and responsible citizenship behavior. *Imagine It* has the ability to provide hard data evidence on the recycled materials and the quantities collected from SUNY Geneseo to the Environmental Health & Safety department. In order to replicate this program, one must figure out if there is any existing recycling program. If there is a program already in place, one can easily expand the program by contacting the Environmental Health and Safety department along with the organization that initiated the recycling system. If there is no other existing program, one can approach the Informational Technology department and learn about the recycling policies for that institution. Once they

figure out institutional policies, one can start looking into local organizations that specialize in recycling initiatives and reach out to them. Finding a compromise between campus policies and the policies of local organizations can be one of the most challenging aspects one might face during this process. It is difficult and time consuming to work through the bureaucracy but once the program plan is approved and organized the only thing left would be promoting it.

Lindsay, Nikolay and Saif hoped to make *Imagine It* a campus wide program before they graduated from Geneseo. Though the program is well established throughout the campus, they have not been able to reach the residence halls with their recycling initiatives. They are currently working with the Residence Life Department to expand the program even more and improve recycling efforts of electronics at SUNY Geneseo.

DATA ANALYSIS

Lindsay, Nikolay, and Saif have done an analysis of the quantity of recycled materials collected by *Imagine It* program before and after 2010. This data shows a clear point of increase in 2010 when the program was expanded campus wide. From 2010 to 2011, there was 120% increase in the collected recycled materials from SUNY Geneseo. Looking at 2011 to 2012, there was 115% increase. Over the two years, from 2010 to 2012, *Imagine It* experienced 137% increase in the collected recycled materials (see graph 1 on page 58).

They also plotted the totals and created a regression line that shows a slight increase for 2013. So far for the 1st quarter of 2013 the quantity of recycled materials is 98 items; this is an increase by two items from the 1st quarter of 2012. The trend line and their assumptions for 2013 is that there will be another increase over 100% from 2012 (see graph 2 on page 58).

The data on the following page summarizes the items that were collected from SUNY Geneseo and recycled by *Imagine It* Company. Lindsay, Nikolay, and Saif broke it down by item and company and compared it yearly to show the type of printer cartridges used over the four years on SUNY Geneseo

campus. HP Laser and Inkjet are the most predominant printer cartridges used at SUNY Geneseo (see graph 3 on page 59).

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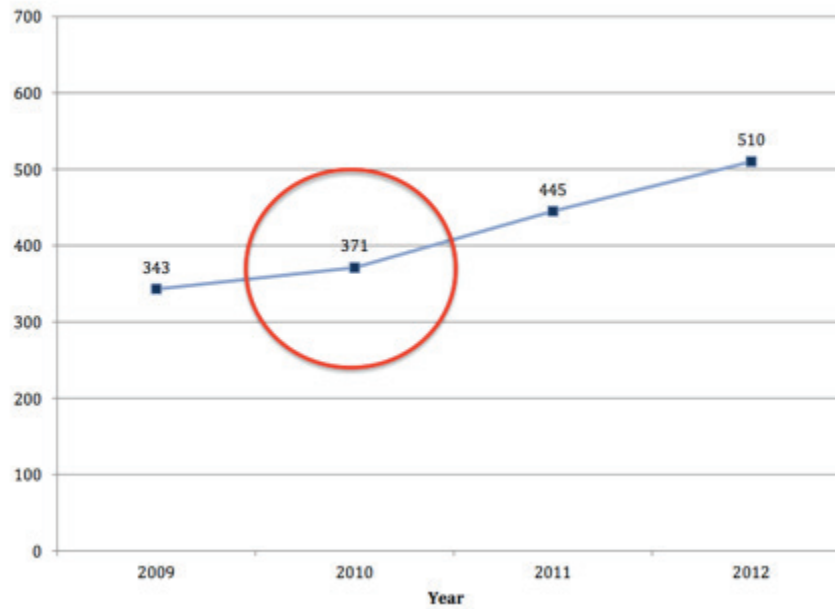
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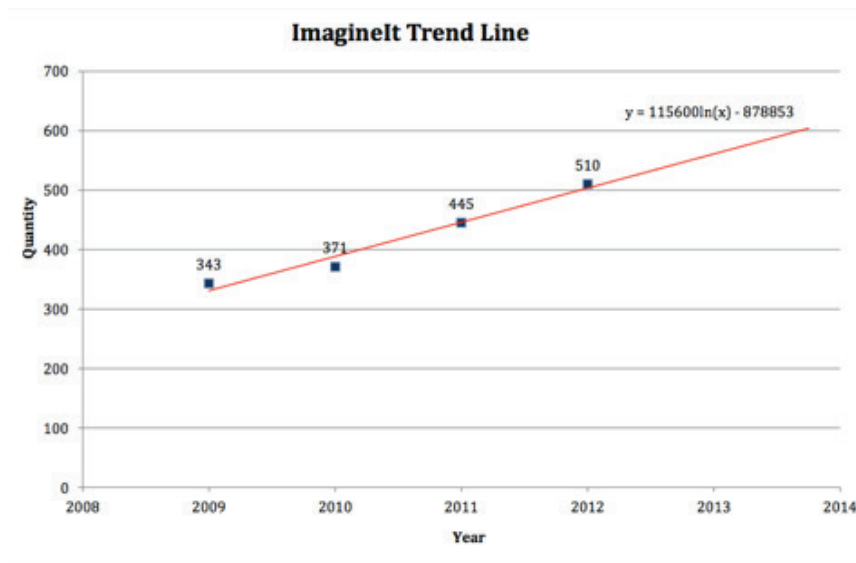
Office: 585-245-5577 fox@geneseo.edu

APPENDIX

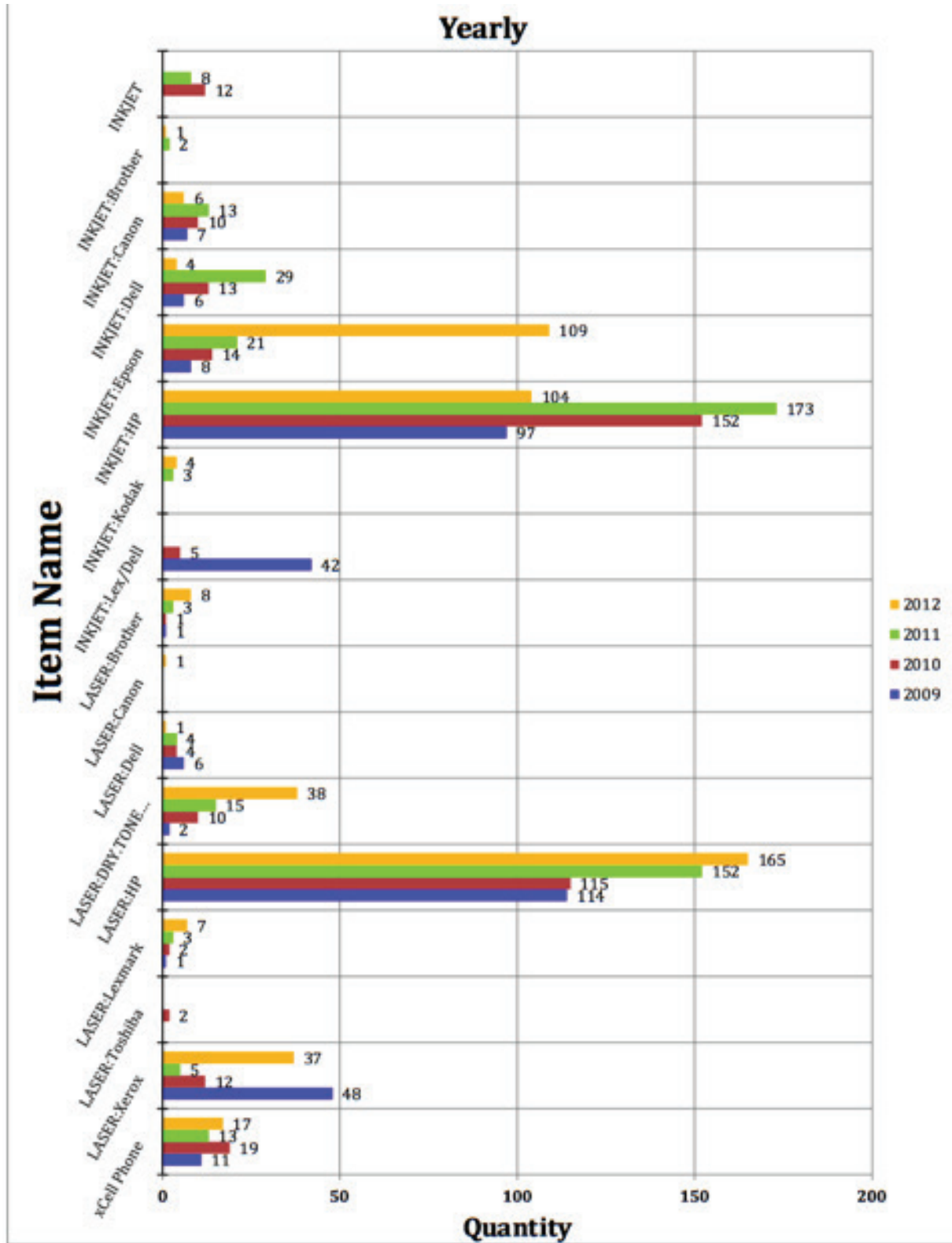
ImagineIt Recycling



Graph 1



Graph 2



Graph 3