

Telephone directory

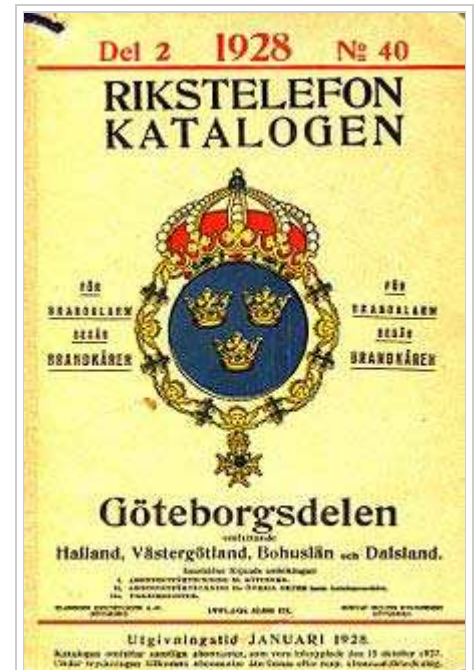
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A **telephone directory** (also known as a **telephone book**, **phone book**, or **white/yellow pages**) is a listing of telephone subscribers in a geographical area or subscribers to services provided by the organization that publishes the directory. Its purpose is to allow the telephone number of a subscriber identified by name and address to be found.

The rise of the Internet and smart phones in the 21st Century greatly reduced the need for a paper phone book. Some communities, such as Seattle and San Francisco, sought to ban their unsolicited distribution as wasteful, unwanted and harmful to the environment.^{[1][2]}

Contents

- 1 Content
- 2 Types
- 3 Publication
- 4 History
- 5 Reverse directories
- 6 In popular culture
- 7 See also
- 8 References
- 9 Further reading
- 10 External links



Gothenburg telephone directory, 1928.

Content

Subscriber names are generally listed in alphabetical order, together with their postal or street address and telephone number. In principle every subscriber in the geographical coverage area is listed, but subscribers may request the exclusion of their number from the directory, often for a fee; their number is then said to be "unlisted" (American English), "ex-directory" (British English) or "private" (Australia and New Zealand).^[*citation needed*]

A telephone directory may also provide instructions about how to use the telephone service in the local area, may give important numbers for emergency services, utilities, hospitals, doctors, and organizations who can provide support in times of crisis. It may also have civil defense or emergency management information. There may be transit maps, postal code guides, or stadium seating charts, as well as advertising.

In the US, under current rules and practices, mobile phone and Voice over IP listings are not included in telephone directories. Efforts to create cellular directories have met stiff opposition from several fronts, including those who seek to avoid telemarketers.^[*citation needed*]

Types

A telephone directory and its content may be known by the color of the paper it is printed on.

- White pages generally indicates personal or alphabetic listings.
- Yellow pages, golden pages, A2Z, or classified directory is usually a "business directory," where businesses are listed alphabetically within each of many classifications (e.g., "lawyers"), almost always with paid advertising.
- Grey pages, sometimes called a "reverse telephone directory," allowing subscriber details to be found for a given number. Not available in all jurisdictions for reasons of privacy.



White pages.

Other colors may have other meanings; for example, information on government agencies is often printed on blue pages or green pages.^[*citation needed*]

Publication

Telephone directories can be published in hard copy or in electronic form. In the latter case, the directory can be provided as an online service through proprietary terminals or over the Internet, or on physical media such as CD-ROM. In many countries directories are both published in book form and also available over the Internet. Printed directories were usually supplied free of charge.

History

The first telephone directory, consisting of a single piece of cardboard, was issued on 21 February 1878; it listed 50 businesses in New Haven, Connecticut that had a telephone.^[3]

The first British telephone directory was published on 15 January 1880 by The Telephone Company. It contained 248 names and addresses of individuals and businesses in London; telephone numbers were not used at the time as subscribers were asked for by name at the exchange.^[4] The directory is preserved as part of the British phone book collection by BT Archives.

In 1981 France is the first country to have an Electronic Directory^[5] on an Internet system called Minitel. The Directory is called "11" after its telephone access number.

In 1991 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled (in *Feist v. Rural*) that telephone companies do not have a copyright on telephone listings, because copyright protects creativity and not the mere labor of collecting existing information.

1996 is the year the first telephone directories go online in the USA. Yellowpages.com and Whitepages.com, both see their start in April.^[6]



New Haven directory, November, 1878.



Recently-delivered 2013-2014 phone books in the trash unopened; in the 21st Century some communities have tried to stop the unsolicited distribution of the books^[1]

In the 21st century, printed telephone directories are increasingly criticized as waste. In 2012, after some North American cities passed laws banning the distribution of telephone books, an industry group sued and obtained a court ruling permitting the distribution to continue.^[1] Manufacture and distribution of telephone directories produces over 1,400,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases and consumes over 600,000 tons of paper annually.^[7]

Reverse directories

Main article: Reverse telephone directory

A reverse telephone directory is sorted by number, which can be looked up to give the name and address of the subscriber.

In popular culture

Ripping phone books in half has often been considered a feat of strength. The Guinness World Record for ripping the most telephone directories is 27; the record for French telephone directories is 29, held by Georges Christen.^[*citation needed*]

See also

- DNS
- LDAP
- Silent number
- Whois

References

- ↑ ^{*a b c*} Yellow Pages ruling endangers SF ban (<http://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Yellow-Pages-ruling-endangers-SF-ban-3951477.php>), Heather Knight, *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 15, 2012; accessed March 19, 2013
- ↑ Appeals court rules against Seattle's curbs on yellow pages (http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/2019441687_yellowpages16m.html), Emily Heffter, *Seattle Times*, October 15, 2012; accessed March 19, 2013
- ↑ Jason Zasky. "The Phone Book" (http://failuremag.com/index.php/site/print/the_phone_book/). *Failure Magazine*. Retrieved 2011-09-22.
- ↑ Records of the Telephone Company Limited (Bell's Patents), BT Archives reference TPA
- ↑ Telephone History in France by Whitepages.fr (<http://www.whitepages.fr/telecom-history-minitel.html>)
- ↑ Telephone Directory History by Whitepages.fr (<http://www.whitepages.fr/telecom-history-ft-late-with-internet.html>)
- ↑ [1] (<http://www.treehugger.com/culture/ask-pablo-what-is-the-impact-of-all-those-unwanted-phone-books.html>)

Further reading

- Shea, Ammon (2010). *The Phone Book: The Curious History of the Book That Everyone Uses But No One Reads*. Perigee Trade. ISBN 978-0-399-53593-2.



Phone Book from Brazil with Qr code on the cover.

External links

- http://www.dmoz.org/Reference/Directories/Address_and_Phone_Numbers/

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Categories: Telephone numbers | Directories | History of the telephone | American inventions

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