

# Designing for Change

How Sign Messaging Types Influence Behavior

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UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**  
Sustainable UGA



# TL;DR

1. People don't stop and read unless you make them.
2. Talking to a specific audience is better than talking to a general audience.

# The Problem

**Recycling contaminated with trash**  
**Trash contaminated with recycling**

Contaminated recycling loads cost more,  
are rejected, and sent to the landfill.





# Our Observations

- Non-standard bin types
- Containers were not co-located
- Many locations had 10x the amount of trash cans than recycling bins
- Recycling bins were not in logical spaces





# Our Solution #1

Consistently placed, clearly labeled co-located bins.



# People read, right?

We assumed that if make it clear,  
people will do the right thing.

## LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

## RECYCLE

Cans  
Paper  
Bottles  
Cardboard

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

# Our Solution #1

Consistently placed, clearly labeled  
co-located bins.





## Our Solution #2

Consistently placed co-located bins that are clearly labeled with signage.

# IS THAT RECYCLABLE?

## YUP.

Place clean items in recycling bins.



**EMPTY CANS**



**PAPER**



**EMPTY  
PLASTIC BOTTLES**



**CARDBOARD**

## NOPE.

Other disposal methods available.



**COFFEE CUPS**  
Bring your own mug.



**PLASTIC BAGS**  
Bring your own bag.



**STYROFOAM**  
Just say nope.



**FOOD**  
Try composting. It's easy.



## Our Solution #2

Consistently placed co-located bins that are clearly labeled with signage.

# IS THAT RECYCLABLE?

## YUP.

Place clean items in recycling bins.



**EMPTY CANS**



**PAPER**



**EMPTY  
PLASTIC BOTTLES**



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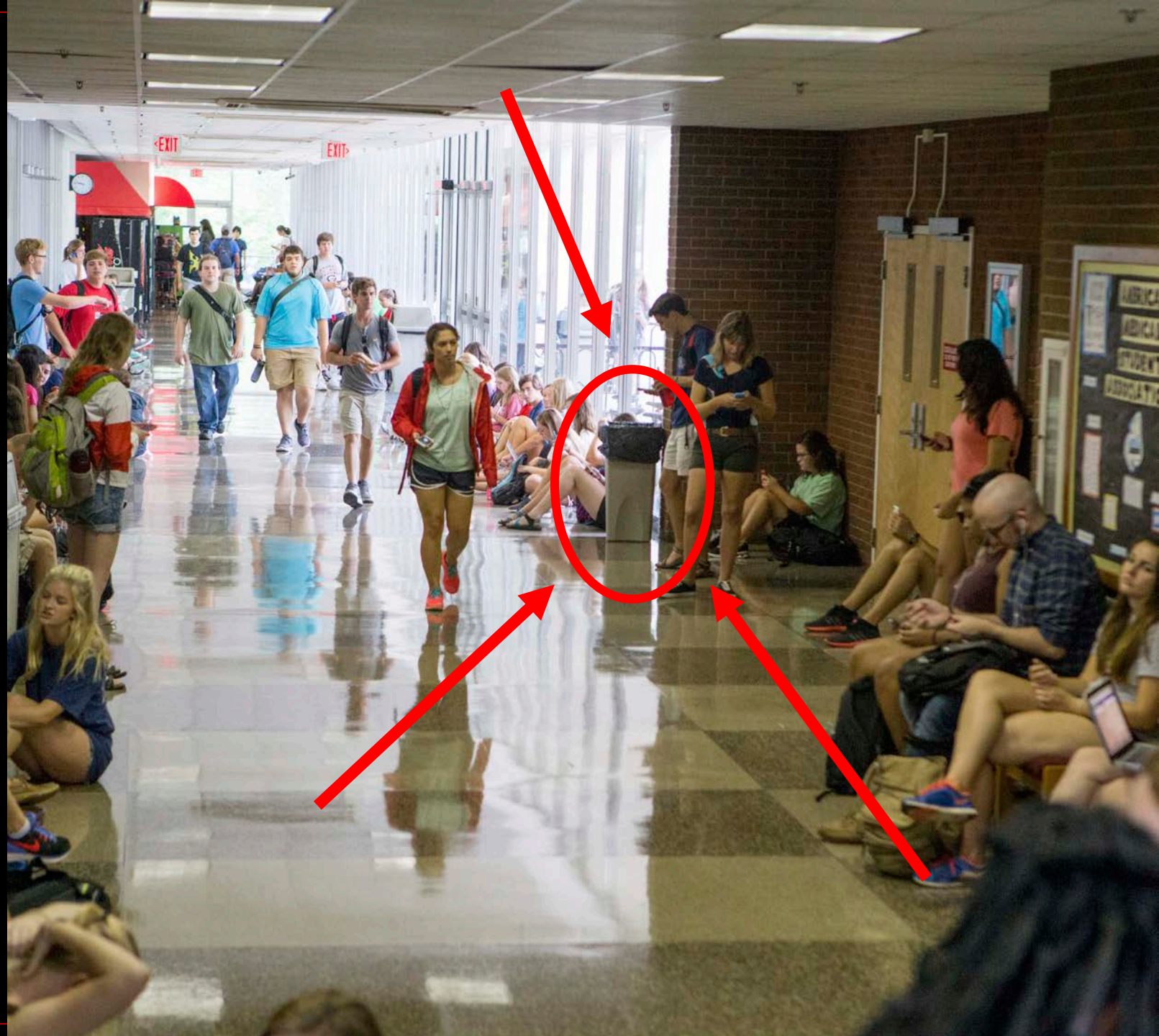
# Our Observations





# Our Observations

Most individuals do not see the bins, nor do they stop to read signage.





# Our Solution #3

Consistently placed co-located bins that are clearly labeled with informational signage.

## RECYCLE THESE HERE

FOOD & DRINK RESIDUE CONTAMINATES RECYCLABLES. KEEP IT CLEAN.



CANS



PAPER



BOTTLES  
(PLASTIC & GLASS)



CARDBOARD

## THROW THESE AWAY

THESE ITEMS CAN'T GO IN OUR RECYCLING BINS. OTHER OPTIONS EXIST.  
VISIT [SUSTAINABILITY.UGA.EDU/RECYCLE](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle) FOR IDEAS.



PAPER DRINK or  
COFFEE CUPS



PLASTIC BAGS



STYROFOAM



FOOD

### RECYCLE

Cans  
Paper  
Bottles  
Cardboard

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

### LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

# Our Solution #3

Consistently placed co-located bins that are clearly labeled with informational signage.

## RECYCLE THESE HERE

FOOD & DRINK RESIDUE CONTAMINATES RECYCLABLES. KEEP IT CLEAN.



CANS



PAPER



BOTTLES  
(PLASTIC & GLASS)



CARDBOARD

## RECYCLE

Cans  
Paper  
Bottles  
Cardboard

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

## THROW THESE AWAY

THESE ITEMS CAN'T GO IN OUR RECYCLING BINS. OTHER OPTIONS EXIST.  
VISIT [SUSTAINABILITY.UGA.EDU/RECYCLE](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle) FOR IDEAS.



PAPER DRINK or  
COFFEE CUPS



PLASTIC BAGS



STYROFOAM



FOOD

## LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

# Our Solution #4

Consistently placed co-located bins that are clearly labeled with signage **that tells an informative story** to a general audience.

## IS THAT RECYCLABLE?

### YUP.

Place clean items in recycling bins.



EMPTY CANS



PAPER



EMPTY  
PLASTIC BOTTLES



CARDBOARD

### NOPE.

Other disposal methods available.



COFFEE CUPS  
Bring your own mug.



PLASTIC BAGS  
Bring your own bag.



STYROFOAM  
Just say nope.



FOOD  
Try composting. It's easy.

CLEAR BAGS  
RECYCLING



BLACK BAGS  
LANDFILL



## Consistent Left Side

# RECYCLE

Cans  
Paper  
Bottles  
Cardboard

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

## IS THAT RECYCLABLE?

### YUP.

Recycle these here.



CANS



PAPER



BOTTLES  
(PLASTIC & GLASS)



CARDBOARD

### NOPE.

Other disposal methods available.



PAPER DRINK or  
COFFEE CUPS



PLASTIC BAGS



STYROFOAM



FOOD



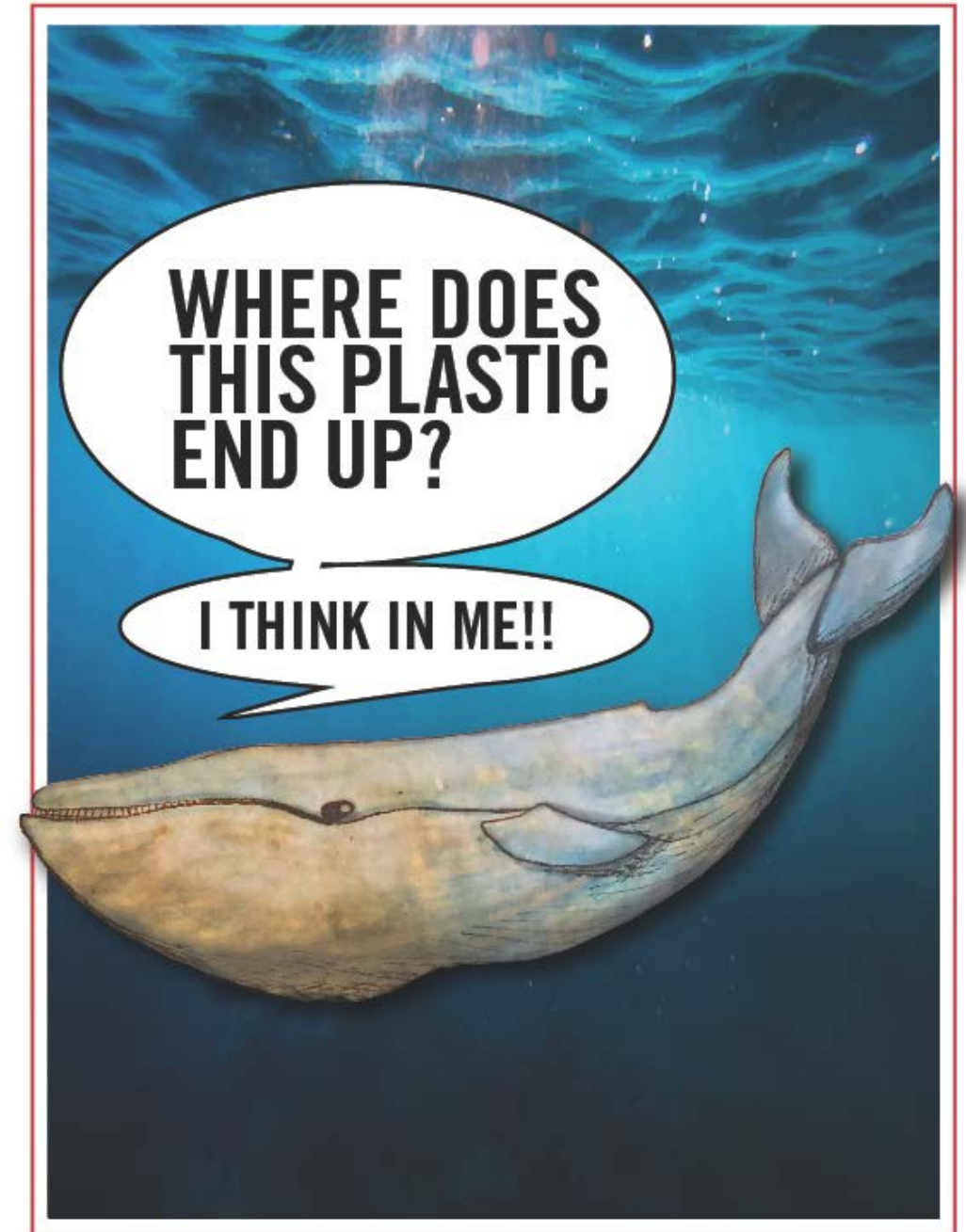
UNIVERSITY OF  
**GEORGIA**  
Facilities Management Division

# General Messaging Right Side

## LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)



# General Messaging Right Side

## LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)





# General Messaging Right Side

## LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

# RECYCLE & CHILL

# General Messaging Right Side

## LANDFILL


Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

# *It's a Match!*

You and Recycling have liked each other.



 Send Message

 Keep Playing

 Tell your friends

# General Messaging Right Side

## LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

# RECYCLE AF





# Our Solution #5

Consistently placed co-located bins that are clearly labeled with signage **that tells an informative story to a specific audience.**

## IS THAT RECYCLABLE?

### YUP.

Place clean items in recycling bins.



EMPTY CANS



PAPER



EMPTY  
PLASTIC BOTTLES



CARDBOARD

### NOPE.

Other disposal methods available.



COFFEE CUPS  
Bring your own mug.



PLASTIC BAGS  
Bring your own bag.



STYROFOAM  
Just say nope.



FOOD  
Try composting. It's easy.

CLEAR BAGS  
RECYCLING



BLACK BAGS  
LANDFILL

# Audience-Specific Right Side

Business school #1

## RECYCLING IS GOOD BUSINESS



GEORGIA'S ALUMINUM RECYCLING INDUSTRY  
MAKES THE FORD F-150 700 LBS LIGHTER.

### LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)



# Audience-Specific Right Side

Business school #2

## LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

# RECYCLING IS GOOD BUSINESS



GEORGIA'S CARPET INDUSTRY USES 1/3 OF  
ALL PET BOTTLES GENERATED IN THE US.





# Audience-Specific Right Side

Forestry school #1

## LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

**DON'T RUIN THE VIEW.**  
LAND IN GEORGIA IS WORTH MORE THAN \$42 PER TON.



"TOURISM IS A KEY PIECE OF GEORGIA'S SUCCESS STORY."  
"IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO INVEST IN THE PROTECTION OF  
OUR NATURAL RESOURCES." - GOVERNOR BRIAN KEMP



**OPEN SPACES DRIVE  
GEORGIA'S ECONOMY.**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
GEORGIA**  
Warnell School of Forestry  
& Natural Resources

# Audience-Specific Right Side

Forestry school #2

## LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

## DID YOU BAG A BUCK?



PAPER BAGS ARE RECYCLABLE, COMPOSTABLE,  
MADE FROM RENEWABLE RESOURCES, AND PART OF  
GEORGIA'S 22 BILLION DOLLAR FORESTRY INDUSTRY.



RECYCLING DRIVES  
GEORGIA'S ECONOMY.



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**GEORGIA**  
Warnell School of Forestry  
& Natural Resources



# Audience-Specific Right Side

History Dept #1

## LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

## WHERE IS “AWAY”?

LANDFILLS ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY LOCATED IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR AND LOW WEALTH.



IN 1987, A BARGE OF GARBAGE SAILED FROM NEW YORK TO BELIZE AND BACK IN SEARCH OF CHEAP LANDFILL SPACE. REDUCING WASTE HELPS US ALL.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS  
ARE HUMAN CONCERNS.

# Audience-Specific Right Side

History Dept #2

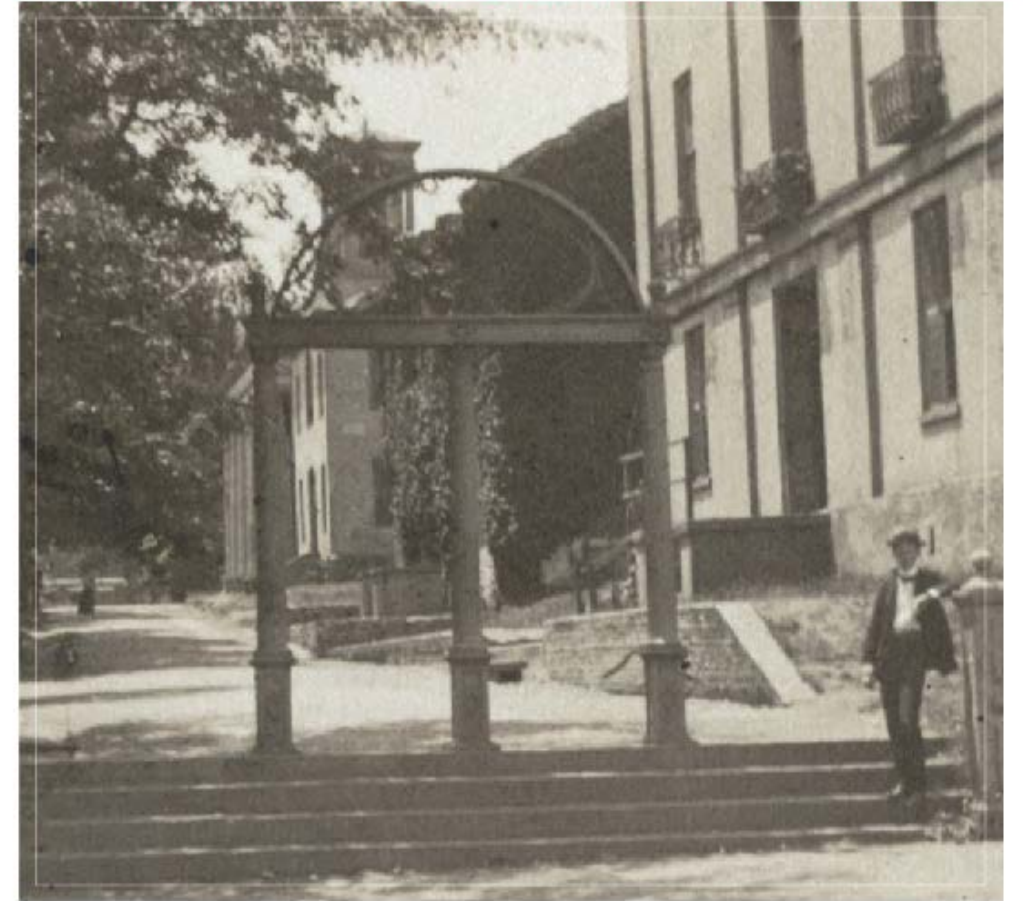
## LANDFILL

Coffee Cups  
Plastic Bags  
Styrofoam  
Food

[sustainability.uga.edu/recycle](https://sustainability.uga.edu/recycle)

## RECYCLING SINCE FOREVER

THE ARCH IS MADE FROM REUSED LIGHT POLES, BOILER RETENTION RINGS, AND ARCHITECTURAL DETAILING.



Conservation and enhancement of the state's and nation's intellectual, cultural, and environmental heritage.

**THAT'S OUR  
COMMITMENT**







# TL;DR

1. People don't stop and read unless you make them.
2. Talking to a specific audience is better than talking to a general audience.