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## Talking trash cans keep Berlin clean

Wednesday, September 28, 2005; Posted: 7:36 a.m. EDT (11:36 GMT)

**BERLIN, Germany (CNN) -- Solar-powered rubbish bins in the heart of Berlin have the city's residents talking.**

In fact, it is not only the people doing the talking -- the rubbish bins themselves are speaking.

Whenever an item is placed inside the trash cans, the bin says, "*vielen danke*" (many thanks).

With a reputation as one of Europe's greenest cities, Berlin has more than 20,000 bins.

The talking variety is designed to encourage people to throw their trash in the bins instead of on the streets, the theory being that with some encouragement, citizens and tourists will want to keep the city clean.

The bins "talk" only during daylight hours to prevent people from getting a fright when it is dark.

Sepp Fiedler, of Solar Lifestyle, the company behind the idea, told CNN that the bins were powered by the sun's rays.

When a sensor inside the bin detects an object being added, it triggers a sound mechanism and a pre-programmed voice is activated.

Fiedler believes solar energy will play an important role in energy production in future.

"We're going to invent a lot of things powered by solar energy because we have to switch from carbon dioxide emitting power sources, and solar energy is one of the options for the future."

He said public reaction to the rubbish bins had been good.

"The people like it. They pass them on the streets and start laughing because it's unusual to have this sort of contact with a litter bin."

Solar Lifestyle has joined forces with Berlin's rubbish collection agency to install the bins in key spots in the city.

Agency spokesman Thomas Klockner told CNN the bins are becoming increasingly popular -- although sometimes people are surprised to hear the bin talk.

"It is a surprise because you don't expect a waste bin to talk. If you put something inside and it says, 'thank you' or 'welcome to Berlin,' you are amazed," he said.



The talking bins, powered by solar cells, say thank you when you put rubbish in them.

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"But then you start talking with your friends about it, 'Hey, I passed by a waste bin and it talked to me,' so people get the idea of using these waste bins into their minds in a funny way."

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