

Catalogue offers unusual

If at about this time of year your mail carrier seems to walk a little more slowly, don't complain. He's probably staggering under the weight of Christmas catalogues.

More than 10,000 direct mail companies are sending millions of catalogues to the 45 percent of Americans who shop by mail. Full of holiday gift ideas, the glossy pages and colorful photographs in these wish books tantalize readers who think of Christmas shopping as an annual ordeal of coping with crowds and tired feet.

The growing appeal of catalogues is partly a matter of convenience and partly because many catalogues feature products that are far removed from the prosaic household items of the past.

DESIGNER CLOTHING, tools, toys, gourmet foods, fine art and exotic gifts are among today's catalogue treats.

"The ease of catalogue shopping certainly enhances its appeal," said Richard W. Tinberg, president of

Hammacher Schlemmer, a New York-based store with a widely distributed catalogue.

"However, the diversity of products available through catalogues also contributes to their growing popularity," he said.

Tinberg speaks from experience, and his perception is based on Hammacher Schlemmer's history of selling elegant gadgets and unusual gifts by mail for more than a century.

The company's most recent catalogue features such items as an electric corkscrew, a heated towel stand, the smallest travel coffeemaker, an electric ice cream scoop and a talking wristwatch.

If you'd like to receive a free copy of the company's catalogue, write to Hammacher Schlemmer, 147 E. 57th Street, Dept. 914, New York, NY 10022, and ask to be put on the mailing list.

And the next time you need to find a gift for a hard-to-buy-for person, perhaps the first place you should look is in your mailbox.



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