

## PHONE BOX TRANSFORMED INTO INFORMAL BOOK EXCHANGE



WORK & LIFESTYLE

As economic pressures have threatened public libraries with closure from lack of funds, the rise of mobile telecoms has rendered public phone boxes effectively redundant. Making the best of two seemingly unrelated developments, the UK-based [PhoneBoox](#) has converted a leftover phone box into an informal book exchange for the community. The brainchild of British media consultant [James Econs](#), the PhoneBoox in Horsley, Surrey, developed over the course of a single weekend afternoon. After being inspired with the idea, Econs cut and painted wood shelves, then installed them in the phone box. Books were scrounged and placed on the shelves, and a message to visitors was inscribed: “You are welcome to take me... but please make sure to replace me!! enjoy.” The PhoneBoox has been a hit ever since it was installed, Econs writes, and a fresh supply of books continues to flow. Econs explains: “I guess the point is you don’t have to ‘be’ anything to make things happen. I’m not a designer, I’m not a bookworm and I’m not a carpenter. I just had an idea, and without really caring whether it would be ‘a success’ – more just wanting to see what would happen – I got on with it. ... That is exactly what I like so much about it; Socially Beneficial Creative Vandalism. Manifestation to deployment in one lazy Saturday afternoon.” Indeed, much like the repurposing of old candy machines to sell seed bombs for [guerrilla gardening](#) or using [retired cigarette vending machines to sell art](#), the PhoneBoox proves once again that grassroots innovation really can conquer all. Be inspired! Spotted by: Florent Lesauvage

23rd May 2011

Email: [james@jamesecons.com](mailto:james@jamesecons.com)

Website: [vimeo.com/21754886](http://vimeo.com/21754886)