

## Reverse Logistics

out saying that Americans are the world's leading refund seekers; consumers in Japan seldom return anything.

Earlier this year, I attended a three-day conference, in Las Vegas, conducted by the Reverse Logistics Association, a trade group whose members deal in various ways with product returns, unsold inventories, and other capitalist jetsam. The field is large and growing. Dale Rogers, a business professor at Arizona State, gave a joint presentation with his son Zachary, a business professor at Colorado State, during which they said that winter-holiday returns in the United States are now worth more than three hundred billion dollars a year. Zachary said, "So one and a half per cent of U.S. G.D.P.—which would be bigger than the G.D.P. of many countries around the world—is just the stuff that people got for Christmas and said, 'Nah, do they have blue?'" The annual retail value of returned goods in the U.S. is said to be approaching a trillion dollars.

Most online shoppers assume that items they return go back into regular

Date: 2024-05-08  
Words: 5  
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