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## CHOOSING A PAPER EATING MONSTER

These days, a home shredding machine is almost a necessity. With the constant barrage of credit card offers, bills, and bank statements that hit our mailbox everyday, it is no wonder that close to 1 million people are victims of identity theft each year.

Whether you live in a house or an apartment complex, there are usually several points where your trash could possibly be accessed and documents stolen.

The majority of apartment complexes don't have secure trash chutes and it can in fact be very easy for dumpster divers to gather data about the apartment dwellers.

In some apartment complexes there are locked trash chutes which are great for the inhabitants because it limits access to the dumpsters to basically the maintenance map and in the trash collectors.

However, shredding sensitive data is not that hard, and might make your life easier in the long run.

Here are a few things to consider when choosing a home paper shredder.

**Durability is important:** You want a machine that is strong and will blast through lots of documents without jamming and without needing repair. Some document shredders are simply too weak, and will jam if you try to shred more than a few pieces of paper at a time.

**Cutting method:** There are several types of cuts available, ranging from plain old strip cuts (the least secure, but often adequate), to confetti cuts which cut the paper into much finer strips and also cross cut, which cuts the paper in more than one direction.

For most home documents, a plain old strip cutter may be all that is needed. The idea is to prevent a dumpster diver from getting a hold of your financial information, and I'd venture to guess that few to none would be patient enough to reconstruct a strip-shredded document.

You can find a reasonably priced home paper shredder on eBay, at Office Depot, or in one of many online web stores.

Here are a few features and characteristics of the document shredder to consider before buying:

**Clearing Paper Jams:** How easy is it to clear minor paper jams? It's a little like putting your hand in the garbage disposal so you want to be sure that it is reasonably easy to get the machine running again because paper jams are inevitable.

**Safety features:** You wouldn't want a curious infant sticking his fingers in the metal teeth of the paper eating monster. Are there safety features on the home paper shredder if you have infants or small children around?

You may also find yourself wanting to shred items with staples and paper clips, CDs, credit cards, ID cards, and floppy disks...Some home systems are strong enough to handle these materials in small volumes and might be worth checking into because these are items tend to accumulate around your home office.

Lastly, remember that some security is better than none: If you are on a tight budget there is one last solution: A pair of sharp scissors.

Visit our website for more resources about [paper shredding](#).