

Website helps victims find stolen bikes

By Aaron Sankin, Huffington Post

Coming outside to see an empty rack where your bicycle used to be is one of the painful realities of living in a major city.

No matter how strong your lock is, there's never a guarantee that it will be there when you get back—no matter how safe the neighborhood typically is.

But Stolen Bike Finder, a new search engine built by the bloggers at Priceonomics, could make bike theft a thing of the past.

The tool works by not only helping you retrieve your stolen bike but also by disincentivizing thieves from absconding with your ride in the first place. The site's founders assumed that if they could make it more expensive and difficult for thieves to fence a stolen bike, it would make them less likely to do so.

The authors explained, "The solution we built is based on the only effective solution to bike theft we've encountered — self-policing by victims. If your bike is stolen, try to find where the thief is selling it and stop them.

The site allows users to enter the make and model of their stolen bike and see if anything similar is being sold anywhere in the country on auction sites like eBay and Craigslist. Visitors will be notified whenever a bike matching the description of the one they lost pops up.

A forum for people to safely buy and sell their bikes with verified proof of ownership exists alongside the search tool.

Priceonomics has regularly posted about the economics of bike

theft, arguing it's so common because the crime involves a low likelihood of being caught and light penalties for those who are.