

## Let's check in on the Ocean Cleanup project



Credit: Newsonia

Here's an update on the [Ocean Cleanup](#), the major project that 24 year old entrepreneur Boyan Slat has designed and is overseeing.

He basically designed a system to clean up the plastic floating around in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. This is a huge, swirling patch of plastic waste generated by human activity, that lands up in the Pacific Ocean, between San Francisco, CA and Hawaii. People say that it is larger than the US state of Texas. That's pretty big. While there are efforts being made to cut down our use of plastic, there have been very few solutions proposed to actually clean up the existing waste from our oceans.

The Ocean Cleanup is an ambitious project that Boyan Slat envisioned, raised money for, modelled and tested for 5 years

before putting it out in the Ocean to see if it can do the job. This pilot system (the one being tested) is currently off the coast of California. It got to the Garbage Patch in October 2018, and the team has been testing it in the ocean, and collecting data on how it is working, with the help of sensors and cameras that have been placed all along the giant barrier. Once they have tested it thoroughly and it is working well, they plan to deploy many such systems in the area. They believe that together, these systems can remove 50% of the plastic for the Garbage Patch every 5 years.

**Here's where it stands now:** It had a bit of a malfunction in December 2018, and the team is fixing the system. In addition, there is a new challenge ahead of this venture. The system was tested thoroughly with computer modelling and programs for 5 years, but real conditions are not really like they are in a model. It turns out that although it is collecting plastic, the system is moving too slow to trap it, and the plastic is escaping.

**What next?** They are fixing the system and working on a redesign in response to the data they have collected in the real world situation. Stay tuned to see what happens next!

Watch this video to see how it is supposed to work.



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