



What You Need to Know About Printed Media and the Environment

There's a lot of misinformation out there about the environmental impact of printed media. "Save a tree – don't print!" "Print is bad for the environment!" "Print is killing the forests!" We've all heard these types of thoughts before. However, none of them are true.

The truth is, print is recyclable, renewable and responsible. Let's examine the facts:

- **Print is Recyclable** – Nearly all Americans – 87% – have access to curbside or drop-off recycling programs. These programs are extremely popular; currently 63% of all printed materials in the U.S. are recycled, and this number has been growing over time.

These recycled paper fibers are used in paper production (where they can be recycled several times), in the manufacture of construction products and in the production of consumer goods.

- **Print is Renewable and Sustainable** – Trees are a renewable resource. In fact, there are more acres of forest and more trees standing today than what existed just 20 years ago. Most of the trees used in paper production today are grown on "tree farms" – growing operations that treat trees as a crop, just like broccoli or wheat. Once a section of trees is harvested the land is replanted with more trees.
- **Print is Responsible** – Just 11% of the world's forests are used for paper, with the majority of most fiber used to produce paper coming from "waste" products – wood chips, sawmill scraps and recycled paper. In the U.S. the wood used to produce paper all comes from certified forests. There are systems in place to track fiber content from certified lands through to the end product, ensuring that the fiber used to produce paper all comes from sustainable forest sources.

In addition, many people forget that digital media also has a carbon footprint. Websites, online ads and email are all supported by a strong infrastructure system. This infrastructure consumes electricity, emits greenhouse gasses and sends electronic waste to our landfills.

From sustainable forests to the renewable nature of trees and the recyclability of paper, the print and paper industries have a positive environmental story to tell—one in which print on paper and healthy forests thrive hand-in-hand.