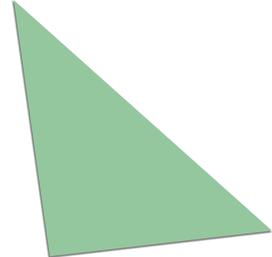


# Print and Paper The Facts



## “Go Green – Go Paperless” messages are misleading

Many leading companies, including banks, utility companies and telecommunications providers, are urging their customers to go paperless with claims that paperless bills, statements and other electronic communications save trees, are “greener” or otherwise protect the environment. While these well-known, reputable companies take great care to be sure their claims used to market other products and services are verifiable and meet both government requirements and accepted industry standards for truth in advertising, they disregard best practices when it comes to making environmental claims about the use of paper.

Beyond the fact that “go paperless” marketing messages ignore the highly sustainable nature of print on paper – it comes from a renewable resource and is one of the most recycled commodities in Europe – these claims fail to meet the most basic tests for acceptable environmental marketing as outlined by the UK Government and others. They are not specific, they are usually not backed by competent and reliable scientific evidence and are misleading because they imply that electronic communication always has less effect on the environment than printed materials.

The truth is that both electronic and paper communications have environmental consequences and we should continue to look for ways to reduce the footprint of both rather than using unsubstantiated environmental marketing claims to promote one over the other.

- “Legally, any claim or information in advertising and marketing (whether it is environmental or not) must be fair and not misleading... And further, that you have robust and/or scientifically accepted evidence to substantiate your claim if ever challenged... Ensure the evidence and assessments forming the basis of the claim is objective and of a kind that can be fully traced and referenced. You should consider the way a reasonable consumer would interpret your claim to ensure you can justify those interpretations with good evidence.”<sup>1</sup>
- All self-declared environmental claims shall be: “accurate and not misleading; substantiated and verified; unlikely to result in misinterpretation... Vague or non-specific claims, which broadly imply some environmental benefit, shall not be used. Examples of such claims include ‘environmentally friendly’, ‘green’ and ‘nature’s friend’.”<sup>2</sup>
- “It is deceptive to misrepresent, directly or by implication, that a product, package, or service offers a general environmental benefit. Unqualified general environmental benefit claims are difficult to interpret and likely convey a wide range of meanings. In many cases, such claims likely convey that the product, package, or service has specific and far-reaching environmental benefits and may convey that the item or service has no negative environmental impact. Because it is highly unlikely that marketers can substantiate all reasonable interpretations of these claims, marketers should not make unqualified general environmental benefit claims.”<sup>3</sup>
- The pulp and paper industry has for long been under attack from different environmental groups, sometimes being projected as a clear-cutting, polluting sector using large amounts of energy, water and other resources. The option

of using information and communication technology (ICT) instead of paper – reducing the consumption and thereby reducing the environmental implications of pulp and paper production – therefore attracts interest among the fast growing group of environmentally aware citizens. However, the direct impact of ICT products and services replacing paper is far from negligible, and the trade-off between the two “technologies” depends on conditions such as use frequency, source of energy, end-of-life management of the products, etc.<sup>4</sup>



- Paper-making creates the need for a dependable supply of responsibly grown wood. The reliable income landowners receive for trees grown on their land encourages them to maintain, renew and manage this valuable resource sustainably. This is an especially important consideration in places facing economic pressures to convert forestland to non-forest uses.<sup>5</sup>
- Over the past 15 years the paper recycling capacity in Europe has doubled as a result of the significant investment by the paper industries in its recycling capacity. The paper recycling rate in Europe reached 71.7% in 2013. The total amount of paper collected and recycled in the European paper sector remains stable at just over 57 million tonnes, despite decreasing paper consumption in Europe. 53.5% of the fibres used in new paper and board are sourced from paper for recycling.<sup>6</sup>

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# Print and Paper The Facts

- Annual UK retail sales of electrical and electronic products constitute around 1.4 million tonnes of materials in 180 million products, including 65 tonnes of precious metals such as gold and silver. Each year, consumers discard a similar amount of products, only 7% of which are re-used and around a third go to landfill.<sup>7</sup> Every year, around the world, almost 50 million tonnes of electrical and electronic goods are discarded. That is equivalent to eight times the weight of the Great Pyramid of Giza. This is simply not sustainable.<sup>8</sup>
- Today, 95.2% of electricity is produced on-site in paper mills using the energy-efficient combined heat and power method... Although the sector is energy intensive, it is less carbon intensive than other sectors. Bioenergy accounts for 56% of our energy use.<sup>9</sup> Our sector is the largest industrial producer of bioenergy, generating 20% of the biomass based energy in Europe.<sup>10</sup>
- The pulp, paper and print industry accounts for only 1% of global carbon dioxide emissions.<sup>11</sup> It is estimated that the production and running of the information and

communications technology (ICT) sector equates to 2% of global GHG emissions, similar to the airline industry, and this is expected to double by 2020.<sup>12</sup>



1. [DEFRA, 2011](#)
2. [International Organization for Standardization \(ISO\), 2012](#)
3. [US Federal Trade Commission, 2012](#)
4. [Arnfolk, 2010](#)
5. [World Business Council for Sustainable Development / NCASI, 2011](#)
6. [European Recovered Paper Council \(ERPC\), 2014](#)

7. [WRAP, 2014](#)
8. [STEP, 2014](#)
9. [CEPI, Sustainability Report, 2013, p36](#)
10. [CEPI, Sustainability Report, 2013, p36](#)
11. [World Resources Institute \(WRI\), 2005](#)
12. [Gartner, 2007](#)

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