

◆ *Is Your Journal Worth the Paper It's Printed On?*

Moderator:

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Speakers:

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Guy Dresser
Allen Press
Lawrence, Kansas

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We live in a digital age and may one day become a paperless society, but the average person in the United States, the largest paper consumer in the world, still uses 700 lb of paper per year. That statistic is worrisome because papermaking consumes natural resources. About 90% of printing and writing paper comes from virgin fiber, which is obtained by harvesting trees from forests. Deforestation produces 20% to 30% of global carbon dioxide emissions and leads to losses of carbon storage, forest canopy, and biodiversity. Manufacturing paper requires more water per ton than any other product. Most paper is bleached with chlorine derivatives, which create dioxins and other toxicants and pollutants. Finally, the environmental effects are not limited to the papermaking process. Paper constitutes about 40% of material disposed of

in landfills. Decomposing paper produces methane, a contributor to global warming that has a much higher heat-trapping capacity than carbon dioxide.

Those natural resources have values beyond papermaking. Frank Locantore, of Co-op America, says that we have a moral obligation to protect and promote the sustainable use of the resources, and using paper made with recycled content can make a big difference. Adding fiber from recycled paper can decrease water consumption by paper mills by one-third. Using recycled content reduces the number of chemicals required to process paper from hundreds for virgin-fiber paper to dozens for recycled paper.

On the printing front, the environmental savings are less when soy-based inks are used. Guy Dresser, of Allen Press, said that alternative inks, such as soy inks, may be mostly petroleum based. Because the government requirement for soy inks is only 7% soy, most inks contain as much as 60% petroleum. Soy-based inks are also slow to dry and may not work well with some presses.

Interest in postconsumer recycled paper and alternative inks has grown in the last few years. Dresser advised consumers to look for “environmentally friendly” or “environmentally responsible” paper—paper manufactured with recycled content and certified by the Forest Stewardship Council or the Sustainable Forestry Initiative to show that the virgin content comes from sustainably managed forests. Know which mill makes the paper, where it gets its fiber, and what kind of energy supplies it.

Dana Compton, of the National Academy of Sciences, presented an example of how a publisher can begin to consume less paper and maintain its commitment to sustain-

ability. Her group first analyzed its inventory of back issues and reduced its print run for each issue published. In consultation with Locantore, it developed a plan to begin to use more recycled content in its house paper. It considered cost, availability and security of paper supply, appearance of the paper, and environmental effects of the papermaking process. Its supplier was able to provide a lower-cost paper containing 10% postconsumer content that met the requirements. Compton used the Environmental Defense Fund's Web site (www.edf.org/papercalculator) to conduct an “eco audit” to measure the effects of the changes and reported the results in publications with logos to alert readers to the use of recycled content.

The benefits of using paper with recycled content are many, and the trade-offs are few: a possibly higher cost and perhaps somewhat lower quality and diminished brightness. An independent survey by Opinion Research Corp, commissioned by Green Press Initiative and Co-op America, found that consumers are willing to pay more for publications printed on recycled paper.

How do you begin the process? Locantore said that Co-op America's Magazine PAPER Project (www.MagazinePAPER.org) provides free consultations to help publishers to navigate the path of environmentally responsible paper and develop practical strategies to reduce paper waste. Dresser urged the audience not to expect to convert to 100% recycled paper right away; just get started and don't stop. 🔥