

# 31 Ways to Reduce Paper Usage

The UK uses the equivalent of 4.48 trees of paper, per person every year. So much for the paperless society: Global consumption of paper has increased by almost half since 1980.



An [Article](#) Written by Ben Harack for Vision Earth in 2010 has inspired us to share some of his top tips for reducing paper usage.

In his article he cites [William McDonough talk at TED](#) where he challenges designers with the following:

*“Design something that makes oxygen, sequesters carbon, fixes nitrogen, distills water, accrues solar energy as fuel, makes complex sugars and food, creates microclimates, changes colours with the seasons, and self-replicates”.*

There is no doubt how fantastic trees are and how important they are to our environment. There is also no doubt that we need trees to make paper, which even in a tech driven society we still heavily rely on. But we don't need to use as much paper as we do.

Reducing your print will:

- Save you money
- Reduce environmental impacts

Here are some of Ben's top tips to reducing paper consumption (with a few notes from us)...

## Printing

1. Think before you print. Do you really need to print it? Many people have bad habits of just clicking the print button whenever they want to read something. Especially in office settings this can be incredibly wasteful.
2. If you only need one page of a document, only print that. This is often very easy to do in the 'print' menu of whatever word processor (or Internet browser) you are using.
3. When printing a web page, copy and paste the text into a word processor so that it is formatted correctly for printing. Printing web pages 'as is' often prints a lot of junk that you don't want, perhaps also using up colour inks as well. [Arena's Managed Print Service \(MPS can set up rules to print black only.](#)
4. Proofread your work carefully before printing it. Use the 'print preview' mode in your word processor / presentation software / spreadsheet software in order to make sure what you are printing is exactly what you want. [Arena's MPS can delete print jobs that are no longer required or forgotten about.](#)
5. You can print on both sides of the paper with most modern printers. This is often referred to as print 'duplex'. [Arena's MPS can set up rules to print both sides of the paper automatically every time.](#)
6. Adjust margins on your documents. The smaller margin of .75 inch (1.90cm) is becoming more common.

## Office

1. Electronic document collaboration is superior to paper document collaboration. *Arena's Electronic Document Management (EDM) system is a simple system that allows you to cooperatively share documents*
2. It is possible to do effective editing and collaboration even using standard word processors. For instance, you can learn to use "track changes" in Microsoft Word, or Edit->Changes in OpenOffice Writer. This lets you put editing marks in documents, and also view the editing changes that have been made by other people.
3. Use email and electronic documents rather than paper mail when you can. *Arena's EDM system is simple way to send documents we can even provide legally binding digital signature solutions.*
4. Use a USB stick, to move around or share electronic documents rather than printing them. Encourage people coming to meetings to bring their reports in electronic format, and for attendees to bring electronic storage of their own (or share via Internet-based document storage).
5. Use electronic fax services. There are a number of them available. *Arena offer Fax services with both MPS and EDM.*
6. Don't place paper contacts on business cards (such as a postal mailing address). Only put email, and phone. This forces people to contact you through these electronic mediums.

## General Usage

1. Change your bills to 'paperless' and pay them online or by phone. Most companies will make this easy for you to do since an Email is a lot cheaper than postage. You can also set up automatic billing. Ask for paperless reports from credit cards and banks as well. Most banks offer this service through their websites or phone support.
2. Save online receipts in a folder on your computer. How? In Windows you can take a screenshot by pressing the "Print Screen" key on your keyboard. Once you have taken the screenshot you can use 'paste' in an image editing program such as Paint, or a word processor such as Microsoft Word. This can get a bit tiresome if the receipt is multiple pages long. An even better technique is to print to a file. *For office receipts and invoices Arena EDM is a perfect solution for this as all you need to do is drag and drop the receipt onto the system and it automatically archives.*
3. Try to end junk mail. Many companies have simple contact details for phone or internet.
4. Minimise your use of paper. Re-use one-sided paper for notes, sketches, rough work, etc. Use both sides of pieces of paper.
5. Don't use a bigger piece of paper than you need. If you only need half or a quarter of a page to write down a recipe or shopping list, then only use that amount.
6. Use paper from recycling bins for notes, etc. Most people only print on one side, leaving a full side of high quality white paper.
7. Use electronic storage rather than paper storage for material. Don't print them unless you really have to. Electronic storage can be very reliable if it is set up with backups. *Arena EDM provides all the storage space you will ever need with incredibly reliable and resilient backup systems.*
8. If you need to buy paper, buy recycled when you can. It isn't perfect, but it is a step in the right direction.
9. Be frugal about magazine subscriptions, newspapers etc. Many newspapers have online versions. Online magazine subscriptions are also available on your iphone, Google phone and Amazon Kindle

## Home

1. Use cloth napkins.
2. Use rags instead of paper towels.
3. Try to not use paper plates. Use durable washable ones if you need something for a BBQ. In terms of environmental impact the trend usually goes like this: Reusable plates are better than paper plates which are better than plastic plates.
4. Use a handkerchief instead of tissues.
5. Use a white board for lists/notes/announcements.
6. Buy bulk foods using your own reusable containers rather than buying supermarket boxed goods

Ref:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2125107/Global-consumption-paper-increased-half-1980.html>

<http://www.visionofearth.org/live-green/31-ways-to-reduce-paper-usage/>



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