

Environmental Defense's Paper Calculator

The Paper Chase

Despite the boom in laptops and Blackberries, paper still rules the business world. Americans use about 10,000 sheets, or 700 pounds, of paper per person each year.

That's why Environmental Defense developed the Paper Calculator, an online tool that makes it easy to measure the pollution and natural resources impacts of various paper choices. Environmental Defense released the updated tool in November, which now delivers resource comparisons in user-friendly terms, such as the number of trees saved, tons of waste avoided and gallons of water conserved. "Using less paper and switching to recycled paper conserves wood, water and energy, and helps reduce pollution and waste," explains our paper guru Victoria Mills. "And it can be done without increasing costs, so it's a win-win situation." For each of the 13 major grades of paper and paperboard, users can see how using less paper, increasing recycled content, or changing other specifications can reduce impacts on the environment. "The Paper Calculator is a valuable resource for Staples and our customers who are interested in understanding the environmental impacts of their paper purchasing decisions," says Mark Buckley, Staples' vice president for environmental affairs.

Environmental Defense's Paper Calculator is already providing real benefits to paper users. For example, using the Paper Calculator, Starbucks was able to measure the impact of switching to an industry first 10 percent post-consumer recycled paper cup. This small change will reap significant environmental benefits each year, including reducing the consumption of roughly 78,000 fewer trees; saving 58 billion BTU's of energy, enough energy to supply 640 homes for a year; avoiding 47 million gallons of wastewater, enough to fill 71 Olympic swimming pools; and preventing 3 million pounds of solid waste from entering the landfill, equivalent to 109 fully loaded garbage trucks.

Visit www.papercalculator.org to learn more.