

# The MONTHLY BALE

Volume 1, No. 1  
September 2004

An informative and inspirational monthly newsletter from the Working Group Recycling Committee to MIT Recycling Ambassadors, colleagues, and the MIT community

Welcome to the inaugural edition of **The Monthly Bale**. This semester our monthly newsletter will focus on the 3 R's: **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**. In today's fast paced, convenience-driven, disposable society, the 3 Rs, and to a lesser extent, the additional 3 R's, *restore, repair, and refuse*, are an easy mantra for each of us to remember how to have a positive impact on our environment. The 3 Rs are in this sequence for good reason: **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle** is the order in which a responsible consumer deals with today's endless influx of goods. In order to have less impact on the Earth's resources we need to first **Reduce** the amount of unnecessary goods produced and wasteful packaging generated, **Reuse** existing goods by passing on unwanted products and sharing resources with our friends, coworkers and neighbors, and lastly, if no other use is seen for an existing product or packaging, **Recycle it!**

However, for our purposes this semester's focus will be:

- September issue: Recycling, and more specifically, paper recycling at MIT.
- October issue: Reusing and all the many options for reusing at MIT and the larger community
- November issue: Reducing the amount of waste we generate.
- December will offer an overview and wrap up as well as many holiday tips for incorporating all of the Rs into the sometimes wasteful holiday season.

## Cutting the Costs of Paper: Saving Forests, Water, Energy ... and Money

### Worldwatch Institute

Global consumption of wood fiber for papermaking could be cut by more than 50 percent, reports a new study by the Worldwatch Institute (a Washington, D.C.-based research organization that analyzes global environmental and development issues). This reduction can be achieved through a combination of trimming paper consumption in industrial countries, improving papermaking efficiency, and expanding the use of recycled and nonwood materials, according to Janet Abramovitz and Ashley Mattoon, co-authors of *Paper Cuts: Recovering the Paper Landscape*.

Global paper use has grown more than six-fold since 1950. One-fifth of all wood harvested in the world ends up in paper. *It takes 2 to 3.5 tons of trees to make one ton of paper.* Pulp and paper is the 5th largest industrial consumer of energy in the world, using as much power to produce a ton of product as the iron and steel industry. In some countries, including the United States, paper accounts for nearly 40 percent of all municipal solid waste.

Making paper uses more water per ton than any other product in the world, said Abramovitz. It also produces high levels of air and water pollution, all to make a product that is usually used once and thrown away.

Papermakers can adopt proven and profitable methods of production that slash energy use and pollution. Eliminating chlorine bleaching, which is deadly to the environment and dangerous for workers,

is an essential step towards producing cleaner paper and improving profitability. Scandinavia has cut chlorine from most of its production and has seen deadly dioxin levels fall significantly. In the last 25 years, many industrial countries have trimmed the amount of energy used to make a ton of paper by 20 to 50 percent (U.S. 22 percent, Japan 50 percent), and water use by even more.

"Papermakers can also incorporate more nonwood fibers, making use of a portion of the agricultural wastes that are currently burned in many places, while reducing chemical use in pulping and driving down demand for wood fiber," said Mattoon. The authors propose doubling nonwood products like wheat straw as a fiber source, and increasing the share of recycled paper for fiber from today's 38 percent to 60 percent.

Expanding the recycling of used paper has enormous potential to bring environmental and economic benefits. Despite a tripling in the volume of paper recycled since 1975, some 57 percent of used paper is still not recycled. Because of soaring consumption, increases in the overall volume of paper waste have outpaced the growth in recycling. Each year the United States sends more paper to the landfill than is consumed by all of China (the world's second largest paper consumer). *Beyond saving trees, making new paper from old takes a fraction of the energy and chemicals used in virgin paper production.*

“Recycling makes use of the ‘urban forest’ the huge supply of waste paper in cities, and eases pressures on landfills and incinerators,” said the authors. Recycling and better product design can also help companies save money.

Consumer products giant Procter and Gamble shaved the amount of paper packaging per product by 24 percent in a short time. Since nearly half of all the world’s paper goes to packaging, such savings are significant. Shipping companies such as Airborne, UPS, FedEx, and the U.S. Postal Service are now using 50 to 100 percent post-consumer wastepaper for envelopes and boxes and are eliminating bleached paper. (UPS, the largest such company, ships over 3 billion packages per year.)

Computers, fax machines, and high speed printers and copiers make it possible to churn out vast quantities of paper. *In the United States, the average office worker uses some 12,000 sheets of paper per year.* Of the major grades of paper, printing and writing paper is both the most polluting and the fastest growing worldwide.

There are gross inequities in access to paper. The United States, with less than 5 percent of the world’s population, consumes 30 percent of the world’s paper. Each year industrial countries use an average of 164 kilograms per person, while developing countries use just 18 kilograms per person (United States 335 kg/person/year, Japan 249, Germany 192, Brazil 39, China 27, India 4). However, usage is growing rapidly in some developing countries: between 1980 and 1997, consumption in Indonesia rose more than seven-fold, in China more than five-fold, and more than four-fold in South Korea and Thailand.

If industrial countries trimmed their paper use by 30 percent, an amount largely possible through good housekeeping alone, global consumption would fall, and developing-country consumption could rise to meet basic needs without adding to the serious global environmental burden of paper, said the authors.

*Janet N. Abramovitz is a Senior Researcher at the Worldwatch Institute where she focuses on biodiversity, natural resources management, human development, and social equity. Ashley T. Mattoon is a Staff Researcher at the Worldwatch Institute.*

# Paper Recycling @ MIT!

from <http://web.mit.edu/facilities/environmental/reuse.html>

## Paper: “If you can rip it, you can recycle it.”

All paper recycling bins around campus - desk side gray or blue bins, common area large paper bins (formerly just for newspapers), and smaller blue-top bins - take a wide range of paper products including the following:

- All white and colored paper
- Newspapers
- Glossy paper and magazines
- Carbonless forms
- Envelopes with or without plastic windows
- Manila envelopes
- Plastic/metal spiral bound paper
- Labels and self-stick notes
- File folders
- Any of the above with metal or adhesive are OK

Need a desk side recycling bin or an updated sticker for your older bin? Contact Kevin Healy at [recycling@mit.edu](mailto:recycling@mit.edu) and provide a name, extension, and room number for delivery. Delivery takes about a week. To order blue-topped bins, contact Office Depot via SAP ECAT.

## Cardboard

Facilities recommends that large cardboard containers be flattened for easier transport, but this is not mandatory. Also, please remove all polystyrene packing materials. They will recycle every bit of cardboard that they can. Small pieces of cardboard can be thrown in the desk side gray or blue bins or common area blue-top bins. Larger amounts can be placed beside the desk side bins (flattened) or in hallways and will be removed for recycling. If it is not flattened or broken down, please label it “recycling” so that it doesn’t get contaminated by trash.

Please do not put out pizza boxes, waxed cardboard, (e.g. milk cartons) or other drink cartons for recycling.

## Phonebooks and Catalogs

Soft cover books such as the following can be put in desk side recycling bins:

- \* glossy or plain paper catalogs

- \* yellow or white pages
- \* MIT phone books or catalogs
- \* course catalogs
- \* paperback books
- \* Flattened cardboard and paperboard

To recycle large numbers of phonebooks or catalogs, email: [recycling@mit.edu](mailto:recycling@mit.edu) to request large blue recycling totes.

## What not to recycle

- Pizza boxes and/or anything with food on it
- Waxed cardboard (e.g. milk or other drink cartons.)
- Paper towels, napkins, or tissues
- Hardcover books (email [reuse@mit.edu](mailto:reuse@mit.edu) or donate to a charity)

**For more information about recycling Plastics, Glass, Aluminum, Toner Cartridges, Batteries, Monitors, or other environmental initiatives, please go to <http://web.mit.edu/facilities/environmental/reuse.html>**

**For more information on recycling TYVEK envelopes (\*DuPont Tyvek is made with 25% post-consumer recycled content from milk and water jugs!), call 1-800-838-7668.**

**Thank you for reading this first issue of The Monthly Bale. We hope you have enjoyed it. We are grateful for the support of the Environmental Programs Office and the Dept of Facilities. Please contact us if you have comments, suggestions, or questions, at [staffrecycles@mit.edu](mailto:staffrecycles@mit.edu)**

**For more information about the Working Group Recycling Committee, please go to <http://web.mit.edu/wgrecycling/index.shtml>**

**For more information about the Recycling Ambassadors Plus Program, please go to [http://web.mit.edu/wgrecycling/ambassadors\\_plus.shtml](http://web.mit.edu/wgrecycling/ambassadors_plus.shtml)**

# Great News!

## The WGR Recycling Ambassadors and their colleagues affect recycling @ MIT!

### Clean Out Your Files

To all who participated in the **Clean Out Your Files** paper recycling event during May 2004, we want to let you know that your participation made a **BIG DIFFERENCE** in MIT's recycling efforts!!

From Kevin Healy, MIT recycling coordinator and WGR committee member:

"For the month of May, the mixed office paper jumped from 33.3 tons to 39.5 tons. The rate had taken a turn down but May reversed the trend. I'm certain this is in no small part due to the "Clean Out Your Files" advertising. Each one of the "totes" holds 250 lbs, with 8-10 left at each location = 1 - 1.25 tons." (per location= 6 additional tons for May)

If your office or department/lab/center is planning a clean out due to relocation or reclaiming of file space or enhancing the Feng Shui energy, please contact Kevin at [recycling@mit.edu](mailto:recycling@mit.edu) to order one or more **BIG BLUE TOTES** for paper recycling.

### Recycling Ambassadors to Receive Informational Packets

This fall the WGR (Working Group Recycling Committee), in conjunction with the Department of Facilities and EPTF (Environmental Programs Task Force) will distribute packets of information to Recycling Ambassadors. Ambassadors may then post, distribute, or otherwise make this information available to their department, lab, or center. Please email [staffrecycles@mit.edu](mailto:staffrecycles@mit.edu) with any comments, suggestions, or requests for materials to be included in this packet. For more information on the MIT Staff Recycling Ambassadors PLUS Program, please visit [http://web.mit.edu/wgrecycling/ambassadors\\_plus.shtml](http://web.mit.edu/wgrecycling/ambassadors_plus.shtml)

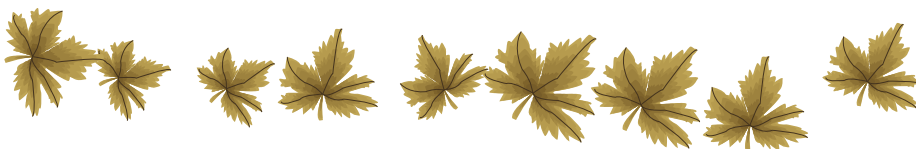
### Working Group Recycling Committee to Distribute Bookmarks

Watch your favorite MIT library this fall for a plantable bookmark detailing paper recycling at MIT and the mission and resources of the Working Group Recycling Committee. Bookmarks will also be given to new employees as part of the orientation packet.



**Bookmark in Bloom:** WGR member Diana Hackman shares the results of planting her WGR bookmark from 2003... a huge, lush, wild-flower! Watch the MIT Libraries this fall for another plantable bookmark focusing on paper recycling.

Turn to the  
**LAST PAGE**  
for a special  
poster on  
paper recycling!



### Ask The Experts

Kevin Healy, Recycling Coordinator, Facilities and Ruth Davis, Manager of Communications, Facilities, will answer your questions about recycling at MIT. Please send your questions to [staffrecycles@mit.edu](mailto:staffrecycles@mit.edu). Your question may be publicized in our next newsletter!

#### Q. Where do I recycle Toner Cartridges and do they really get picked up for recycling?

A. Recycle small empty inkjet toner cartridges using the postage paid envelopes found in the Distributive Mail Centers. Large empty toner cartridges (and fax roller cartridges) can be turned in for recycling in the large marked cardboard bins at MIT's mailrooms.

"For the recycling of printer toner cartridges in the Mailrooms, we sent .34 tons back to be reused and refurbished in May. We're sending out double that this week. This is all perfectly reusable yet toxic waste that didn't get trashed."

### Working Group Recycling Committee

The mission of the MIT Working Group Recycling Committee is to develop and deliver programs that educate administrative and support staff about recycling, reducing and reusing goods. Efforts include identifying/addressing gaps in staff understanding about recycling as well as gaps in recycling resources and creating ways to increase recycling at MIT.

# WHY RECYCLE PAPER?

## WHY BUY PAPER WITH POST-CONSUMER RECYCLED CONTENT?

### CUT WASTE

Paper accounts for 40% of all municipal waste  
Recycled paper means less trash, lower taxes & other disposal costs

### SAVE ENERGY

60-70% energy savings over virgin pulp  
The paper industry is the 3rd largest user of energy in the U.S.

### PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES

The U.S. uses 100 million tons of paper a year & use is increasing  
Recycled paper uses 55% less water & helps preserve our forests  
Recycling of waste paper creates more jobs

### REDUCE POLLUTION

The paper industry is one of the largest water polluters in the world  
Recycled paper reduces water pollution by 35%, reduces air pollution by 74%, and eliminates many toxic pollutants

ALL paper, including newspapers, glossy paper, magazines, catalogues, phone books, Post-It notes, plastic/metal spiral-bound paper, memos, carbonless forms, broken down cardboard, file folders, colored paper, white paper, cardboard, boxboard, and junk mail, can be recycled at MIT. The trees will thank you for it! To recycle, put your paper products in the grey deskside or blue-topped paper bins in your work space. To request bins, contact [recycle@mit.edu](mailto:recycle@mit.edu).

For more information:

[web.mit.edu/wgrecycling](http://web.mit.edu/wgrecycling)  
[web.mit.edu/environment](http://web.mit.edu/environment)  
[web.mit.edu/facilities](http://web.mit.edu/facilities)

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