



## **Green Matters**

### **Creating Earth Friendly Communications**

*By Amy Wong and Christine Quebedeaux*



Green Week. Earth Day. Earth Hour. The planet is getting more face time than ever. Buzzwords and catch phrases like “carbon footprint” and “go green” permeate the news, fashion and government; there’s even an entire television network, Planet Green TV, dedicated to eco-friendly entertainment. And why not? Like it or

not, everything we do has a global impact—good or bad—from the food we eat to the cars we drive.

You’re probably aware of a few of the ways you, as an individual, can embrace a greener lifestyle—including recycling, saving electricity by turning off the lights when you’re not in the room and walking or riding a bike to work. But how can you, as a representative of your institution, make the world a greener place?

**Paper makes up a third of our entire municipal waste, which is 254 million tons. Half the trees felled in the U.S. every year are used for paper, and an estimated 30 to 40 percent of our landfills are filled with paper waste.<sup>1</sup>**

Colleges around the country are already recycling waste, building green dorms, serving local food and buying clean energy. Taking a greener approach to your communications initiatives is one more way your college can communicate a shared commitment to a sustainable future.

#### **JUMP ON THE (ECO-FRIENDLY) BANDWAGON**

Since 1990, more than 350 university presidents and chancellors in more than 40 countries have signed the Talloires Declaration, the first official commitment made by university administrators to environmental sustainability in higher education. The 10-point action plan suggests ways to incorporate sustainability and environmental literacy through teaching, research, operations and outreach. The actions include creating an institutional culture of sustainability; involving all stakeholders; broadening service and outreach nationally and internationally; and practicing institutional ecology.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Reducing your carbon footprint is no passing fad**

Students everywhere are looking with a critical eye at what they perceive as wasteful. They recycle. They buy organic food. They drive hybrids. According to AMP Agency’s Green AMPlified Study, 95 percent of millennials consider themselves to be at least a little environmentally conscious. So it’s important for institutions to let students know what their colleges are doing for the cause.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Merchant, Brian. “Try Out the 5 Best Kinds of Tree-Free Paper.” Planetgreen.discovery.com. January 2009. <http://planetgreen.discovery.com/work-connect/tree-free-paper.html>

<sup>2</sup> “Talloires Declaration.” Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future. May 2009. [http://www.ulsf.org/programs\\_talloires.html](http://www.ulsf.org/programs_talloires.html)

<sup>3</sup> “Good Things Come In Green Packages.” Ypulse.com. October 2008. <http://www.ypulse.com/ypulse-guest-post-good-things-come-in-green-packages>



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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Top 20 College & University List highlights the annual green power purchases among higher education institutions within the Green Power Partnership. Combined, these purchases amount to more than 1 billion kilowatt-hours of green power annually. That's equivalent to the amount of electricity needed to power more than 95,000 average American homes annually.<sup>5</sup>

**The University of Phoenix purchases nearly 47 million kilowatt-hours of green energy annually—the equivalent of powering more than 4,000 average American homes per year.**<sup>4</sup>

## SETTING A GOOD EXAMPLE

College editors and designers aren't just writing about the green movement in their articles, they're applying those forward-thinking principles to the production of their admissions materials and magazines.



- **University of the Pacific's** admissions materials use soy-based inks and are certified by EPA Green Power Partnership and Climate Leaders program, Green-e and the Forest Stewardship Council. They are also generated from 100 percent renewable sources. The additional cost of the more expensive paper is offset by cutting pages and mailing efficiently—taking advantage of the highest United States Postal Service automated discount for letter rate.

- **Middlebury College** prints *Middlebury Magazine* on 10 percent recycled paper and is pushing other institutions to make the switch. Pamela Fogg, the art director of the alumni magazine, started a group called the Power of Ten Percent ([www.poweroftentpercent.org](http://www.poweroftentpercent.org)) that encourages other administrators, editors, art directors and production staff to use paper that has 10 percent more recycled content than what they currently print on. The group suggests making room for the paper in the budget by streamlining revisions and cleaning mailing lists.<sup>6</sup>

- **Colby College's** alumni publication, *Colby Magazine*, is considered one of the leaders in the move to 100 percent recycled paper. The college calculated it saved 26 barrels of crude oil, 1,575 trees and 575,829 gallons of water in 2007 by switching to the new paper.<sup>7</sup>

## HOW TO PRINT EARTH FRIENDLY

Not sure where to start? You can reduce your environmental impact at every step of the printing process, from design to waste management. Your communications staff, designers and printers can work together to create eco-friendly viewbooks, brochures, magazines—almost every tool has opportunities for greening!

<sup>4</sup> "Green Initiative." University of Phoenix. May 2009. [http://www.phoenix.edu/about\\_us/green\\_initiative.aspx](http://www.phoenix.edu/about_us/green_initiative.aspx)

<sup>5</sup> "Green Power Partnership: Top 20 College & University" U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. May 2009. <http://www.epa.gov/grnpower/toplists/top20ed.htm>

<sup>6,7</sup> Masterson, Kathryn. "Alumni Magazines' Discovery: It's Not Easy Being Green." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. October 2008. <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v55/08/08a01801.htm>



### **Reduce in design**

Resist the urge to put *everything* in print to cut down on the number of pages used. By being thoughtful about content, you can use your print piece to make an impact—showcasing beautiful photography, pull quotes and calls to action. Detailed information can live on the Web.

Another way to reduce? Cut down the physical size of the printed piece. After all, smaller size = less paper.

### **Request eco-friendly ink**

Vegetable-based inks, made with vegetable oil, significantly reduce the amount of ozone-depleting Volatile Organic Compounds released into the air during printing. These biodegradable inks also have good press stability and color control, meaning they give brighter colors and rub off less on reader's hands. Allow more press time for these slower-drying inks.

Ask for least toxic colors. Some ink colors, like metallics and fluorescents, are less friendly than others because they contain toxic heavy metal.

#### **Want to save a tree?**

**Use "tree-free" paper.**

**This paper uses alternative fibers like kenaf, cereal straw and sugar beet pulp.**

#### **Pick your paper**

Use paper that's recyclable. White paper is usually the most recyclable.

Try to avoid fluorescent and goldenrod paper, along with plastic covers and bindings, which not all areas recycle.

Look for environmentally preferred paper stocks that are manufactured under Environment Management Systems. These stocks endorse a process that includes wood fiber from sustainable forests, use elemental and chlorine-free bleaching and offer a whiteness and smoothness comparable to traditional stocks.

When choosing recycled paper, remember to consider the postconsumer content of the paper. Fifty percent postconsumer means that half of the paper is made of materials that were consumed and recycled. If the content isn't specified, it's probably made from manufacturing wastes that have not made a complete loop.<sup>8</sup>

### **Prep in prepress**

Many printers use a computer-to-plate system, in which electronic page files are transferred directly onto a printing plate. This efficient and cost-effective process eliminates photographic film, reduces processing chemicals and cleaning solutions and replaces traditional paper with digital proofing.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "Waste Prevention in the Printing Industry." California Integrated Waste Management Board. May 2009. <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/BIZWASTE/factsheets/Printing.htm>

<sup>9</sup> "Computer to Plate." Cleangreenprint.com. May 2009. <http://www.cleangreenprint.com.au/the-process-computer.html>



### Use digital printing

Digital printing is greener than traditional offset printing. In addition to reducing waste through smaller runs, digital printers use non-toxic dry inks, and the ink-transfer rate is almost 100 percent. By comparison, offset machines use hazardous chemicals and varnishes that have a lower transfer rate. Digital toner cartridges are recyclable, and certain high-end digital printers are made up almost entirely of recyclable parts while at the same time generating lower emissions than offset printers. However, digital printing is mostly cost effective when printing smaller quantities (1,000 to 2,000 pieces). You can read more about digital printing in Zehno's *Printing with Personality* white paper.

Program books and pocket-sized agendas for the **Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC)** Annual Industry Conference 2009 were printed with the waste-reducing digital process using electricity generated from 100 percent renewable sources. In fact, the entire conference went green. Water coolers replaced plastic water bottles, recycling bins were located in each meeting room and participants received access to download GMAC conference materials online, instead of traditional paper handouts.



### Recover

Make sure your print pieces are manufactured so that they can be recycled—and encourage your readers to do so.<sup>10</sup>

**EarthColor, a printing organization, is also making an eco-friendly impact by investing in bioremediation, in which bio-oxidizers capture and consume airborne pollutants. Additionally, the heat generated from the process is channeled into drying systems, eliminating the need to use natural gas as a fuel.**<sup>12</sup>

### Harness the wind

Look for printers that purchase renewable wind energy. Wind energy is a pure, endless and homegrown resource that is entirely fuel free. Using clean and locally produced electricity also boosts the economy. Wind farms create jobs and revenue in landowner royalties and taxes for rural communities.<sup>11</sup>

EarthColor, one of Zehno's preferred printing partners, powers printing with 100 percent renewable wind energy. The company purchases 25,002,000 kilowatt-hours each year from wind farms across the nation. Every year the estimated environmental benefit of this purchase is equivalent to planting more than 2.2 million trees.

### GET A STAMP OF APPROVAL

So you've gone green. But how will your readers know? Most people will look for a telltale symbol or small block of copy that shows a publication is eco-friendly. Third-party environmental certification speaks highly of your institution and will add value to your print projects.

<sup>10</sup> "Re-Guide." Power of Ten Percent. May 2009. [http://www.poweroftenpercent.org/re\\_guide](http://www.poweroftenpercent.org/re_guide)

<sup>11</sup> "Earth's Green Plan." EarthColor.com. May 2009. <http://www.earthcolor.com/environment/index.html>

<sup>12</sup> Shapiro, Fred. "Earthcolor Sustainability Embraces Bioremediation." PrintingNews.com. February 2009. <http://www.printingnews.com/print/Printing-News/Earthcolor-Sustainability-Embraces-Bioremediation-/358861>



Remember, you can't just place environmental logos on your materials willy-nilly. Labels are backed by rigorous third-party certification audits to ensure materials are in compliance with organizational standards. So make sure you plan enough time in your schedule to get certified. Here are just a few of the certifications and organizations devoted to ensuring sustainable products:

**Forest Stewardship Council Certification**

[www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org)



The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) trademark identifies products that contain wood from well-managed forests certified in accordance with the rules of the FSC, ensuring that people, wildlife and the environment benefit from the forestry practices. Zehno, by policy, always specs FSC-certified paper.

**Sustainable Forestry Initiative**

[www.sfiprogram.org](http://www.sfiprogram.org)



The Sustainable Forestry Initiative's forest certification standard is based on principles that promote sustainable forest management, including measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat and species at risk.

**The Chlorine Free Products Association**

[www.chlorinefreeproducts.org](http://www.chlorinefreeproducts.org)



The Chlorine Free Products Association promotes sustainable manufacturing practices, implements advanced technologies free of chlorine chemistry, educates consumers on alternatives and develops world markets for sustainably produced third-party certified products and services.

**Green-e**

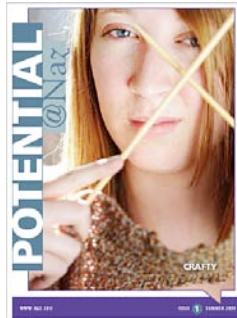
[www.green-e.org](http://www.green-e.org)



Green-e is the nation's leading independent consumer protection program for the sale of renewable energy and greenhouse gas reductions in the retail market. Green-e offers certification and verification of renewable energy and greenhouse gas mitigation products.

**SHARE THE WEALTH: TAKE IT TO THE WEB**

Don't make your print pieces do all the heavy lifting. More and more campuses are responding to the call for a greener campus by going digital. While ink and paper is still in demand, digital tools such as Web sites, Web features, e-newsletters and blogs can be added in the communications mix to work in tandem with print.



- **Nazareth College's** tri-yearly admissions publication replaces a traditional viewbook. Stories, infographics, profiles and teasers contain call-to-action links leading to the college's Web site. The materials are printed with vegetable-based inks, generated from 100 percent renewable sources and certified by EPA Green Power Partnership and Climate Leaders, Green-e and the Forest Stewardship Council.

- **Ithaca College's** *Fuse* is a student-written magazine for prospective students and their families that is published both in print and online. Each print story drives students to [fuse.ithaca.edu](http://fuse.ithaca.edu) to view unique content like photo galleries, featured blogs, Q&As with *Fuse* staffers and other Web exclusives.

If the Web's so great, why not convert all publications to electronic formats? In a survey conducted in February 2008 by Zogby Interactive, 55 percent of respondents aged 18 to 29 say they get most of their news and information online, compared to 35 percent of those age 65 and older. That means a completely Web-based approach would miss 45 to 65 percent of your target audience, young or old. Better to make it a cross-media approach.<sup>13</sup>

#### **WELL, WHAT'S STOPPING YOU?**

Your path to more sustainable communications might be a bumpy one. You may come across some technical, budgetary and aesthetic roadblocks. So consult with your staff, communications team and printer to map your best plan of action for greener marketing tools. The earth will thank you!

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*Zehno has worked with many schools and programs to help effectively plan and produce communications campaigns that work in today's world. To learn more, call 1-800-860-1079 or write to [info@zehno.com](mailto:info@zehno.com).*

<sup>13</sup> Joly, Karine. "Magazines: Gone Digital, Going Paperless?" *University Business*. June 2008. <http://www.universitybusiness.com/viewarticle.aspx?articleid=1078>