

# Press Release

## Don't be fooled by WWF's new PDF format

Announcement misleads users regarding the true facts about sustainable forestry and print.

**According to WWF**, "every day, entire forests are cut down to make paper. Paper that's senselessly used to print out documents all over the world: websites, emails, even entire books, in spite of the fact that it's easy to avoid printing by saving the document as a PDF. But even PDFs can sometimes also be printed out. So to stop unnecessary printing and encourage a new awareness about the use of paper, we've developed a new, green file format: WWF. A format that can't be printed out. A simple idea that saves trees."

### An open letter to Editors and Journalists

When I first heard that WWF had launched their own version of PDF software that won't allow printing of documents, I'm afraid I did not take it very seriously. After all, we all demand increasing functionality, not less, and surely printing is a necessary function for all at some time or another? They'll be telling car manufacturers to not fit wheels next!

But then I thought about this more and reached the conclusion that this initiative is not only a retrograde step for users but also some sort of Orwellian attempt to impose misguided beliefs upon a general public who deserve to be treated better.

Not printing does not save trees. And that's the truth!

The reality is that forests in Europe are growing at a rate of 1.5 million football pitches every year, cover about 44% of Europe's land mass, and are 30% larger than in 1950. 94% of the paper we use is made in Europe and it may be surprising to learn that only 11% of the worldwide timber felled is used directly for paper making – fuel and construction are far bigger users.

But, whatever the use, the demand for non fossil fuel and renewable timber is leading to ever increasing reserves of trees in managed and increasingly bio diverse forests and it could be argued that whilst there is a demand for paper and other forest products, the future of our managed forests is assured.

Print and Paper  
have a great  
environmental  
story to tell



So what's WWF's beef about printing? Well it's clear that first they are not telling the world about how far the industry has moved to reduce its impact and also they are trying to scare users with tales of forest destruction which has very little to do with paper production and certainly not in Europe.

Print is not senseless, as WWF imprudently describes it, it is one of the most powerful communication mediums and increasingly recognised as still having enormous benefits for serious communication and study rather than the distractive, sound and eye bite medium offered by electronic communication. It is a sad fact that, with schools and teachers in general having been brainwashed by the myths about print and paper peddled by various pressure groups, we have schools switching to electronic methods of teaching which may well have huge implications upon a new unread generation unable to communicate coherently and confidently.

WWF's encouragement to ditch the printed word is not only misleading but highly dangerous.

And what about the environmental effects of electronic communication? 60/70% of computers are now left on all the time and the European energy requirements of data servers and IT equipment now exceeds that of the airline industry. Greenpeace has identified that electronic waste is the fastest growing component of the municipal waste tip and there are serious worldwide environmental concerns surrounding the disposal of quickly outdated electronic equipment. With paper recycling rates in Europe at an all time high of 72.2%, encouraging the switch from paper based to electronic communication, without the environmental facts, and without identifying and comparing the carbon impact of both media channels, is just irresponsible.

No, print and paper can be a highly sustainable product. It is made from a renewable and recyclable resource and if used responsibly, which means that collection and recycling rates must be continuously improved, may well be the sustainable way to communicate.

So WWF needs to be challenged about the statements they are making and whilst I am not an expert in the scope and remit of advertising practice, I believe they are now promoting a product on the basis of a misleading environmental claim and face reporting to the UK Advertising Standards Authority, and other similar European bodies, for Greenwash.

It's a pity, having done so much good work, that WWF is now 'barking up the wrong tree'. The public must be told the truth and, from a WWF perspective, What a Waste of Funds!



Martyn Eustace  
Director  
Two Sides

#### **About Two Sides**

Two Sides is an initiative by companies from the Graphic Communication Value Chain including forestry, pulp, paper, inks and chemicals, pre press, press, finishing, publishing and printing. Today there nearly 300 members. Our common goal is to promote the responsible production and use of print and paper, and dispel common environmental misconceptions by providing users with verifiable information on why print and paper is an attractive, practical and sustainable communications medium. [www.twosides.info](http://www.twosides.info)

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**Notes to editors**

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