



## How “Green” Is Paper?

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ScanSmart’s primary business is the conversion and consolidation of the various media which organizations have used to store records down to a single digital form. This includes microfilm/fiche, Canofile, and most significantly paper. Paper consumption is growing in the US by about 20% per year<sup>1</sup> and since the US is already the number one consumer of paper, this statistic is very disturbing.

The recent media focus has been on carbon emission but deforestation is continuing as fast, if not faster than ever. Trees are our best weapon against current and growing carbon levels so their preservation is critical to our environment. Considering that the average American office worker consumes a ream of paper every 2 ½ weeks, there is a giant opportunity for reduction in consumption in the workplace.

Our software products and conversion services are focused on allowing an organization to virtually eliminate all of their office’s paper production and usage. By converting records rooms to digital images, accessibility and disaster recovery planning are also vastly improved. What could take hours to find in paper form is now accessed and backed-up digitally in seconds.

Paper and pulp production is the fifth largest industrial consumer of energy and uses more water per ton of product produced than any other industry. Paper and paperboard also make up 38% of all materials dumped in landfills in the US<sup>2</sup>. A significant piece of this being office waste. Our service provides for the conversion of paper material to digital and ultimately the certified destruction and recycling of all paper material. Not only are we reducing or eliminating the production and storage of paper in our clients’ sites, we are also injecting additional pulp material for the creation of recycled paper for those that have yet to change their habits. This ultimately reduces the demand for pulp from newly harvested trees.

Paper is relatively cheap to obtain but extremely expensive to store while maintaining easy access. Organizations are forced to build larger office spaces, warehouses or other offsite buildings to accommodate the growing paper problem. All of this space must be powered, heated and cooled in order to protect the paper it holds. However, it could be significantly reduced or eliminated by converting paper based business processes to digital images. This allows organizations to maintain smaller, more efficient offices and enables employees to work remotely. We have clients that are seriously considering the possibility of closing their professional office and having all employees work remotely from home. Imagine the effect this could have on clogged arteries during commuting hours into Boston.

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<sup>1</sup> Resource Conservation Alliance (<http://www.woodconsumption.org/products/paper.pdf>)

<sup>2</sup> New Jersey Higher Education Partnership for Sustainability ([www.njheps.org/drewpp.ppt](http://www.njheps.org/drewpp.ppt))



Our services are ubiquitously applicable to knowledge workers. Who hasn't stopped to complain about not being able to find a piece of paper on their desk or in a file cabinet? Employees champion us because we give them the tools they need to do their jobs more effectively while employers enjoy the increased productivity, decreased risk, and cost savings. These cost savings are derived mainly from labor expenses (higher productivity) but the savings in resources are far more enduring.

-Tim Heald