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## **New research reveals a love for print – but environmental myths persist**

The results of a new survey commissioned by Two Sides reveal a telling insight into the public's perceptions and attitudes towards print and paper.

Carried out by independent research company Toluna, 6,000 consumers from across Europe (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Finland, Norway and Sweden and the UK) were surveyed on their environmental concerns and preferences relating to paper.

### **Environment**

It is clear from the survey that consumers are concerned for the environment, but there is a large gap between perceptions of key environmental areas and what is indeed fact. This is particularly evident when exploring consumer awareness and understanding of forestry and recycling.

- 60% of consumers believe European forest are shrinking, whereas the fact is that, over a 10 year period European forests have been growing by an equivalent of 1,500 football pitches every day.
- Only a fifth of those surveyed believe the paper recycling rate in Europe exceeds 60%, whereas the true figure is over 72%.

75% of European consumers believe it is important to use paper products from sustainably-managed forests. However, when coming to purchase paper products, just 34% of respondents pay attention to forestry certification labels, that products come from a sustainable source. This might be explained by a lack of awareness of two of the major certification schemes, the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC™).

- 34% of European consumers are aware of FSC
- 27% are aware of PEFC

The survey asked respondents to rank the environmental impact of several common materials and products. Consumers believe wood to have the least environmental impact, closely followed by glass and paper. Perhaps unsurprisingly, due to the significant amount of media coverage on the topic recently, plastic is considered by consumers to have the worst impact on the environment.

### **Preferences**

A prominent trend the survey uncovered was, that when it came to reading books, magazines and newspapers, print came out on top.

- 69% believe that print is the most enjoyable way to read books
- 61% prefer to read magazines in print
- 54% believe that print is the most enjoyable way to read a newspaper

Further to print being the preferred medium for reading, the push to “switch to digital” by financial organisations and service providers has proved unpopular with many consumers. Overall 78% believe they have the right to choose how they receive their communications (electronically or printed) and a further 62% agree they should not be charged to receive paper statements.

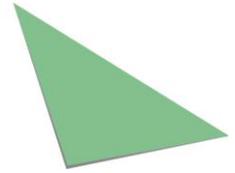
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Two Sides Managing Director, Jonathan Tame concludes,

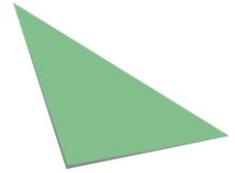
*“It is positive and not too surprising to see that print as a medium for reading and communications still comes out on top with a clear majority agreeing it to be the most enjoyable way to read.”*

*“Overall, the report reveals an interesting insight into how print and paper is viewed by the public. It is positive to see both wood and paper are viewed as low environmental impact materials but the misconceptions around forestry and recycling rates have highlighted the necessity to raise awareness in these areas.”*

*“The prevailing environmental myths about paper reaffirm the vital need for the Two Sides campaign to raise awareness and directly tackle these misconceptions.”*

The full report can be downloaded here:

[www.twosides.info/resources/research](http://www.twosides.info/resources/research)



## Key Findings from the Report:

### Forests:

- Only 10% of Europeans believe European forests have been increasing in size.
- This reaches as low as just 5% for Italian consumers whereas the highest reach was 17% in France.
- 75% of European consumers believe it is important to use paper products from sustainably managed forests but just 34% pay attention to forestry certification labels such as FSC or PEFC.

### Recycling:

- Only 20% of consumers believe the recycling rate exceeds 60% - the overall European paper recycling rate is over 72%!
- Austrian consumers best understood the paper recycling rates with 30% believing the rate was above 60%.
- Italian and UK consumers were the least aware about paper recycling rates with just 17% believing the rate was above 60%.

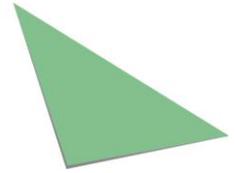
### Consumer Choice:

- An overwhelming 78% of consumers believe they should have the right to choose how they receive communications (printed or electronically) from their service providers.
- UK consumers felt the most strongly about this with 83% agreeing they should have the right to choose their preferred method of communication.
- 73% of French consumers do not believe they should be charged extra to receive paper bills.

### Reading Preferences:

- 69% of consumers believe print is the most enjoyable way to read books.
- 70% believe it is important to “switch off” and read more in print.
- 45% believe they spend too much time on electronic devices.

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## Myths vs. Facts

### Forestry:

**MYTH:** 59% believe European forests are shrinking

**FACT:** European forests have been growing by over 1,500 football pitches everyday

### Recycling:

**MYTH:** 63% believe only recycled paper should be used.

**FACT:** Because fibre degrades after time, virgin fibre is essential to European paper production.

### Electronic Communication:

**MYTH:** 53% believe that electronic communication is better for the environment

**FACT:** The ICT industry accounts for around 2.5-3% of global GHG emissions and this is predicted to rise to 14% by 2040.

### Water Footprint:

**MYTH:** 53% believe paper production uses an excessive amount of water

**FACT:** 93% of water is returned to the environment after treatment.

### Paper & Waste

**MYTH:** 33% believe paper is a wasteful product

**FACT:** 72.3% of paper is recycled in Europe – close to the estimated practical maximum of 78%

### The Environment:

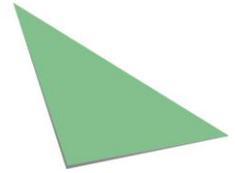
**MYTH:** 25% believe paper production is a major cause of global GHG emissions

**FACT:** The paper sector is one of the lowest greenhouse gas emitters and is the biggest single industrial user and producer of renewable energy in the EU.

Find out more: [www.twosides.info/myths-and-facts](http://www.twosides.info/myths-and-facts)

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## Notes to editors

Two Sides is a not for profit, global initiative promoting the unique sustainable and attractive attributes of print, paper and paper packaging. Two Sides' members span the entire print, paper and packaging value chain including: forestry, pulp, paper, packaging, inks and chemicals, finishing, publishing, printing, envelopes and postal operators.

## For more information contact;

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