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Wasting Paper

Has anyone noticed how much paper goes into the recycle bin, and sometimes without even being used properly? From what I have observed, I have noticed that most students at El Paso Community College use a lot of paper, especially when it has to do with research. This might be because there is so much information that the students think will be helpful. This might be true; however, there are still ways to print without using so much paper. As a student, I am aware that in the process of using paper foolishly, but we often do not take into consideration how much we actually use, the cost to our economy, and how it affects our environment.

There have been several times in a computer or tutoring lab when I notice students print more copies than they need. Most of the time, we do not need the information in those copies, and the paper used is wasted. We must also stop to consider if there is a technical difficulty with the printer because sometimes we do not realize there is a problem and continue pressing “print” and thus end up printing multiple copies of the same information. As a result, we waste paper. If a document fails to print on the first try, it would be an excellent idea to turn to a lab assistant for help. iD2 Communications, a company that focus on communication and sustainability notes that, “The American people use 25% of the world’s paper, and the average

American uses more than 749 pounds of paper per year. Also, the U.S. is ranked first place in wasting paper in the world. Even with recycling efforts, paper makes up over 25% of garbage.” It is easy to see how we are throwing away a lot of resources.

We must also take into consideration how the lack of attention to this problem affects our environment. Sadly, we fail to realize how much damage we cause to our natural resources. Are we aware of how many sheets of paper are wasted in a life time? According to information gathered by iD2 Communications, printing is one of the world’s largest industries and the sixth worst in terms of negative impact on the environment. Creating paper from trees requires a lot of natural resources: trees, water, and energy, and iD2 Communications says that, paper manufacturing is the largest industrial user of water per pound of finished product. In fact, one sheet of white paper requires thirteen ounces of clean water. Also, using more paper increases greenhouse gases. For instance, 40 reams of paper are like 1.5 acres of pine forest that are no longer absorbing carbon dioxide. This problem goes beyond just costing a few more dollars for paper in the printer.

With this in mind, we must take into consideration how the wasteful consumption of paper affects us. It is essential as conscious students of El Paso Community College to take the initiative to be aware and understand that the solution lies in our hands. There are several ways to save paper, such as printing only the pages one really needs, printing on both sides of a sheet, or even printing two pages on one side of a sheet, reducing the font size, reviewing the text for grammar and spelling errors before printing, and reducing margins or reducing the size of the source. Also, we can avoid using printed handouts. As anyone can see, there is a variety of tips to save paper. Come on fellow students, let’s not waste paper!