

## 1 "Guest Editorial"

Digitisation expert Jill Hurst-Wahl wonders what happened on the road to the paperless office. We've been travelling down it for a while, but none of us have arrived. Her thoughts on the future of electronic paper.

## 12 "Essay: Why I Prefer Hardcopy"

Katrina Hughes has been gathering information on why we still use hard copy for a presentation at Information Online 2007 in Sydney, Australia. The process has made her question why she finds it nearly impossible to give up the hard stuff.

## 16 "Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge"

Author Cass R. Sunstein holds the theory that a room full of people will always be smarter than a single expert. Adrian Janes reviews his new book and how the theory applies to a collaborative world.

## 19 "Paperless Myth: Rumours of Its Demise Have Been Greatly Exaggerated"

An information expert who helps clients improve their processes and information handling finds it difficult to foresee a future without paper. Ulla de Stricker examines the myth of the paperless office.

Plus ...

Jobs,  
Discussion,  
Tips, Reviews  
and Events



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Joining FreePint is free at <<http://www.freepint.com/>> and connects information practitioners around the world with resources, events and answers to their tricky research and information questions at the FreePint Bar, our free online forum: <<http://www.freepint.com/bar/>>.

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## Guest Editorial by Jill Hurst-Wahl



Jill Hurst-Wahl of Hurst Associates, Ltd. <<http://www.HurstAssociates.com/>> is a consultant who provides digitisation workshops, develops digitisation plans and works with organisations to implement digitisation programs including evaluating software, hardware and vendors for specific digitisation efforts. Since 1989, she has worked on corporate digitisation programs as well as consortial projects. In addition to her consulting work, Jill is a frequent speaker and author. Her blog, Digitisation 101 <<http://www.Digitization101.com/>>, is widely read by those interested in creating, managing, marketing and preserving digital assets.

For 30 years, we have awaited the arrival of the paperless office. With increased use of digital technologies, we have assumed that our use of paper would decrease. Yet we are all surrounded by paper. What happened?

Information is either born digital or digitised. Even current information that is created in an analogue form finds its way into a digital format at some point. Yet as Abigail Sellen and Richard Harper revealed in "The Myth of the Paperless Office" (MIT Press, 2001), these digital documents do not allow us to do those things that we are accustomed to doing. We cannot grasp, carry, fold, write on or trash them. We cannot post them on the bulletin board or burn them in protest. These things we can do with paper are also ways of demonstrating our control over that paper (and the information it contains). Paper persists because we can do more with it than digital files.

As a digitisation consultant, I know that digitising materials will increase access to information and lessen our reliance on paper. Yet the truth is that digitisation is creating a situation in which people come in contact with documents that they want to grasp, carry, fold, write on, post, destroy and control. The only way they can do those things is to print the documents. And so what was supposed to help us rely less on paper only increases the amount around us, because paper interacts with our senses and our need for control in a way that digital files cannot.

In the future, we can only hope that digital files give us the same satisfaction as the paper that fills our offices. This means creating new ways of interacting with digital files. Many companies are already looking at ways of accessing digital materials differently. Those companies include Google as well as Linden Labs (who created SecondLife.com). I recently reported on Second Life in FreePint's sister publication VIP <<http://www.vivaVip.com/>>. Let us hope that their creations finally make the paperless office a reality.

Sincerely,

Jill Hurst-Wahl

## FreePint FUMSI Report -- Risk Management



### Risk Management Report

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Risk is an unavoidable part of doing business, and managing risk is part of everyone's job – from the board room to the shop floor. To manage risk effectively, organisations must process internal and external information on strategy, environment, regulations, competitive landscape and more. They must process that information through a systematic protocol for managing risk in a constantly changing environment.

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Author Jela Webb is a noted consultant, writer, speaker and trainer in knowledge management and risk management fields. In 1992, she was appointed to a new role, Risk Review Manager, in a UK bank, and she has further developed her expertise in the field through MBA studies.

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Mandy Webster is library and information services manager at Browne Jacobson and co-author of "BIALL Handbook of Legal Information Management and Knowledge Management: Social, cultural and theoretical perspectives".

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## My Favourite Tipples

by Mandy Webster

When I'm looking for general legal information on the Internet, I find all of these sites invaluable.

- Delia Venables <<http://www.venables.co.uk/>> provides a good starting point for research with her comprehensive and organised gateway to mainly freely available legal websites in the UK and rest of the world.
- House of Lords Judgments <<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/ldjudgmt.htm>> are available within hours' delivery. Email alerts of when judgments have been delivered and what's on in the week ahead add value to this service.
- A good way of keeping up to date with news about law firms, cases and deals is provided by TheLawyer.com <<http://www.thelawyer.com/>>, a site updated throughout the day.
- LLRX <<http://www.llrx.com/>>, the Law Library Resource Xchange, provides invaluable articles for keeping up to date with law librarianship, KM and IT news worldwide.
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- **Safety Net:** Nowadays risk management is a necessity in any company. A new report from Jela Webb examines how to implement a strategy.
- **Off Piste:** Researcher Jill Fenton lends advice on how to think creatively when researching financial and M&A topics.

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*Recruiter: TFPL Ltd.*  
Country: United Kingdom  
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6323>>

### European Records Manager

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*Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment and Services Limited*  
Country: United Kingdom  
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6365>>

### Records Manager

Position leading records management strategy. Responsible for implementing information retention and disposal programme.  
*Recruiter: Glen Recruitment*  
Country: United Kingdom  
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6362>>

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Qualified Librarian needed to run enquiry service.  
*Recruiter: Instant Library Recruitment (Tribal Group Plc)*  
Country: United Kingdom  
<<http://www.jinfo.com/go/j6354>>

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## FreePint Bar

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Monique Cuvelier is Editor of the FreePint Newsletter. She has served as editor of several publications and her writing has appeared in Publish, USA Today, Bankrate and many others. Learn more about her at <http://www.onopoly.com/support/team/>..

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Technical issues plague our digital world, so it's little wonder so many of us feel attached to paper. Below is a sampling of issues and solutions from the Bar. Log on today to pick up tips or lend your own.

- An alphabet soup of components is failing one Bar member, although his problems aren't uncommon. His old-school PC isn't booting up as it should. Do you have experience with hard disk drives and the Windows operating system? Share some expertise (or find out how others are combating similar issues) <http://www.freepint.com/go/b94545/>.
- If you had to 'at the click of a button' transfer data between a spreadsheet and a text document, which tool would you use? Tell this FreePinter, who needs an easy way of switching content back and forth <http://www.freepint.com/go/b97369/>.
- FreePint's contributors talk about how attached they are to hard copy in this issue of the newsletter, but that doesn't stop large-scale digitisation projects. A US university is looking to digitize all old dissertations and theses, while throwing away originals. This may, however, raise copyright issues. Read about the whole project here <http://www.freepint.com/go/b96962/>. Another university has launched a similar project <http://www.freepint.com/go/b64170/>.
- A recent flurry of activity regarding web images and copyright infringement has spurred another thread on a similar topic. One FreePinter is developing an online, digital image database. But he doesn't have rights and is wondering how to go about obtaining them for the hundreds of images he's about to load. Any suggestions where to begin <http://www.freepint.com/go/b96248/>?
- If you're curious about what one of the barristers or judges involved in an image copyright case might look like, check out this discussion <http://www.freepint.com/go/b91022/>.
- Government websites are often less than they promise to be. FreePint has brought up this issue before <http://www.freepint.com/go/b58587/>, and another FreePinter is asking about it now <http://www.freepint.com/go/b97092/>. If you're interested in reading up on resources relating to US presidential speeches, including the recent State of the Union address, consider ResourceShelf, published by Free Pint Limited and compiled by Gary Price and Shirl Kennedy: <http://digbig.com/4qwnp/> and <http://digbig.com/4qwnq/>.

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Current issue:

- CV Makeover: From Freelance to Consultant
- Robert Alvarez 's 'Before' CV
- Robert Alvarez 's After' CV



Review



Before CV



After CV

## "Why I Prefer Hardcopy"

By Katrina Hughes

Katrina Hughes will present more of her survey findings at Online Information 2007 in Sydney, Australia <<http://www.information-online.com.au/>>. She started working in the library industry 15 years ago, first as a library technician in 1991 and then earning a university degree as a librarian in 2003. She has worked mainly within special libraries in the construction industry and the area of standards. Katrina has also worked in public libraries. She is married and training to be a ballroom dance teacher.

Earlier this year when I was ordering a document that was in both hardcopy and electronic format, I thought to myself, why do we still use hardcopy? Why, especially when we can receive the electronic version of a document quicker and it is easier to store?

I wondered if what I was thinking was something that everyone in the library industry thought, or was I in the minority? This is why, in 2006, I decided to survey the library industry to see why we still use the hardcopy versions of documents.

While I am still going through my survey results, (you will have to wait until Information Online 2007 in Sydney, Australia <<http://www.freepint.com/go/e689>>, for the results) it has made me look at why I still use hardcopy in my personal life. In today's world, where so many things are in electronic format, it's worth considering the question.

When the electronic versions of documents started to become more pervasive, we were told that the paperless office was a reality. But, actually, we have more hardcopy documents now than ever before.

So why, when I can choose electronic versions of documents, do I reach for hardcopy so often? Is this something that my clients prefer, or do only I prefer the hardcopy versions?

After the holiday season has just passed, I've noticed how popular electronic Christmas cards are becoming. I also thought about the reasons that were given from different

organisations about why they decided to send an electronic version of a Christmas card. They ranged from that they saved money, and that the money that they saved will be given to a charity, to it was easier to send an electronic version.

But when I asked myself if I preferred an electronic or hardcopy version of the cards, I preferred paper. Everyone can see a card on a mantle. Only I can see an electronic card on a computer.

This also got me thinking about how practical an electronic version of a document is. If you do not have the computer resources to print something out, only one person can look at an electronic document at a time. Also, you are not really saving that much money if you pay to print something out, as you pay for the electronic version, plus the paper and ink to print a document. So you are really paying for the document twice. I'll talk more about the financial issues of electronic versus hardcopy when I present my paper at Information Online 2007.

Cost aside, maybe we still use hardcopy simply because we like paper better. In a world where everything changes so quickly, I think it is comforting to keep something that's in its original format. A hardcopy version will not suddenly change format overnight, nor do you have to go through different website logins and search for a document. With a hardcopy version all you have to do is take it off the shelf and read it. I think it is reassuring to know that a hardcopy version of a document is constant.

Having an electronic version of a document also means you have to be more careful of where you read it. I would not take a laptop to the beach for fear it would fall in the water or become packed with sand. On the other hand, I'm more comfortable reading an electronic document on a bus going to or from work, provided, of course, that I'm reading the electronic document on a small screen. Electronic copies appear on computer screens, and laptops and computers aren't convenient on buses either. PDAs are better to carry around, although you give up screen size for portability.

Electronic versions of everything from newspapers to bills will continue to multiply. As industry and commerce look at ways of reducing costs, they too are looking at publishing electronic versions of their correspondence to us and sending it by email. In Australia, American Express allows me to view my monthly statements electronically so they don't have to send it via the post.

That may be easier for American Express, but it's not always easier for me. How many of us print off a hardcopy and keep it for our records? I print out a copy as a reminder to pay my bill by its due date. I've considered the alternative of keeping my home computer running with a pop-up reminder when it's time to pay, but rejected the idea since I don't use my home computer every day and might miss the reminder.

Having these printed copies also makes it easier for me to find important documents. For example, while writing this I started looking for a document on my computer and I had to stop and think how to find it. Which folder did I place it in? What name did I give it when I saved it? While I know how easy it is to remember what a hardcopy of a

document looks like, I don't believe it's easy to remember what an electronic version of a document looks like.

Locating a file by its proper name is further complicated by working with so many people over the years (not forgetting to mention my husband here). We all have different methods of naming files. Some people use dates, people's names, the subject matter or simply the first line of the document.

Consider for a moment what happens when you download a document from the internet. Sometimes the name of the file doesn't match the title of the document. Inevitably, the file name contains numbers and letters that jumble into a code that may even include non-alpha-numeric characters. I have difficulty finding documents I just downloaded.

The trouble with locating electronic pages extends past my home computer. I have found it hard to find

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documents on internet pages, especially those I have subscribed to that require a user ID and password. With a hardcopy version of these otherwise password-protected documents, all I have to do is go the bookcase, open the folder and find it. Alas, another reason why I prefer a hardcopy of the electronic version.

I may be fond of hardcopy, but there are merits to electronic. A key benefit of digital is that I can download the most recently published version of a manuscript. Waiting for delivery by more traditional means takes time and can require more money.

Still, while electronic documents are usually cheaper, nothing beats hardcopy for me. And in the end, logistics and cost and accessibility don't explain why. It's much more elemental. It's the feel of having a piece of paper in my hand; that new book smell.

Change is good, but do we have to change everything at once? Me, I'll stick with hardcopy versions of documents, and leave electronic for some time in the future.

#### Related FreePint links:

- "Records Management, the Aunt Sally of your business!" By Tony Croft <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/061103.htm#tips>>
- Why are we still using hardcopy? - Survey <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b68289/>>
- "Digital Preservation Management: Implementing Short-term Strategies for Long-term Problems" Reviewed by Jill Hurst-Wahl <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/071206.htm#bookshelf>>

If a paperless office seems like an attractive option that's just out of reach, this list of top resources for digitisation from Jill Hurst-Wahl might make it that much closer. A longer list appears here:

<[http://www.copyright.com/2006/06/k\\_matthew\\_dames.html](http://www.copyright.com/2006/06/k_matthew_dames.html)>.

- "Digitization Essentials Workshop" PDF By Jill Hurst-Wahl and K. Matthew Dames <<http://digbig.com/4rbxa>>
- "Digitization 101" <<http://hurstassociates.blogspot.com/>>
- DigitalKoans <<http://www.escholarlypub.com/digitalkoans/>>
- "Digital Preservation Management: Implementing Short-term Strategies for Long-term Problems" <<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/digpres.htm>>
- "Moving Theory into Practice: Digital Imaging Tutorial" Cornell University Library <<http://digbig.com/4rbxb>>
- "Digitization & Preservation Online Resource Center" <<http://digbig.com/4rbxc>>
- "Library Copying in the Digital Age" K. Matthew Dames <[http://www.copyright.com/2006/01/communic\\_librar.html](http://www.copyright.com/2006/01/communic_librar.html)>
- "Digital Audio Best Practices, version 2.0" CDP Digital Audio Working Group
- "Digital Preservation and Copyright" Peter B. Hirtle <<http://digbig.com/4rbwy>>
- Digitizationblog <<http://digitizationblog.interoperating.info/>>



## Comment

"As a freelance researcher, I miss picking up intelligence about new sources etc. from colleagues in an office setting. FreePint provides me with a wonderful online community of peers all over the world, who share their collective wisdom."

Freelance Researcher, UK  
September, 2006

## Comment

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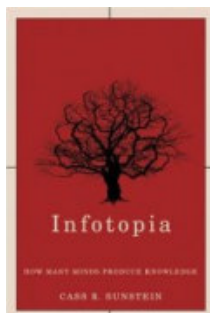
## "Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge"

Written by Cass R. Sunstein

Reviewed by Adrian Janes



Having begun his career in academic libraries, Adrian Janes is currently an Information Services librarian with the London Borough of Havering. Among his influences are Phil Bradley, Philip K. Dick and Chris Morris.



"Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge" concerns how the limitations on our knowledge as individuals might be overcome by working with and learning from the efforts of others. As well as considering long-established means of deliberation (e.g., meetings and juries), author Cass R. Sunstein also examines the use of the Internet.

Sunstein, a faculty member of the University of Chicago Law School and a former attorney-advisor in the Office of the Legal Counsel of the U.S. Department of Justice, examines how people in groups share -- or fail to share -- their knowledge. His reflections often derive from social science experiments.

Sunstein looks at the main ways of eliciting the knowledge of individuals and groups. He stresses that, in deliberation, people may not share all the unique information they have (giving groups a 'hidden profile'). Managers and political leaders can become so committed to a course of action based on insular decision-making that their attitude and organisational structures (termed 'information cocoons' and 'echo chambers') discount information that would contradict it.

Besides deliberation, other methods for obtaining pooled information are taking the statistical average of individual views, or looking at some sort of market. Sunstein enthuses about how the Internet can be used, both in these ways and those peculiar to it, e.g., wikis. He is especially concerned to scotch the idea that many minds deliberating together will necessarily be superior to that of a group of

individuals. But certain conditions, such as group members should be more likely to be right than wrong, must be met to ensure this (although this begs the question of how they become right in the first place).

Following research laid by economist, neuroscientist and Nobel Prize winner Friedrich Hayek, Sunstein invests much hope in market mechanisms to aggregate knowledge. This tips into still greater enthusiasm for 'prediction markets.' These can be internal to organisations or open to a wider circle; rather than commodities, they concern possible events. The rewards tend to be in 'virtual money' or prizes.

Astonishingly, he sees no moral difference between predicting Oscar winners and such questions as the possible number of AIDS infections by 2010. That people might profit from the latter sort of speculation seems not to trouble him; the accuracy of the predictions is his preoccupation in this book.

Of course the book's central issue (that people do not share all they know) is vital to its content. Sunstein also says the herd mentality of organisational hierarchies needs to be addressed if, say, healthcare workers are to open up about their thoughts.

The most absorbing chapter explores wikis, open-source software and blogs. It balances keenness for the co-operation of Wikipedia with the possibility of vandalism; the free speech of blogs with their tendency to become another form of information cocoon. While celebrating wikis, Sunstein's emphasis on economic incentives makes him a little mystified



by the attractive power of being able to participate and be well-regarded that rewards their contributors.

Overall this is a clearly written book, but one that often labours to establish fairly simple conclusions. The proposals for reform to methods of deliberation do little to address the potential problems of being overlooked for promotion, fired or simply unpopular if putting forward information from an inferior or little-known position.

Although the Internet has certainly introduced unique channels for obtaining information, it is also shown to add to the misinformation in the world. So the Utopian world of Infotopia seems only a little nearer.



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## "Paperless Myth: Rumours of Paper's Demise Have Been Greatly Exaggerated"

By Ulla de Stricker



Ulla de Stricker <<http://www.destricker.com/>> is an expert in strategic planning for information services and in designing the underlying information audits and user needs assessments. She has built a strong track record assisting managers of information-centric entities to design, assess and manage their offerings, services and client relationships. Her firm is highly respected in North America among information professionals. Prior to establishing her firm in 1992, Ulla held several senior management positions in the information industry. She is a popular conference speaker and writer on topics of interest to

The other day I happened to look at my office from an angle I don't usually occupy (on a step stool) and marvelled at all the paper objects. Really now, in this day and age? For a knowledge management consultant? It started me thinking: What is it about paper that makes it such a useful tool? Why do we, indeed, still need it (within reason, of course)?

We have all seen the horror offices so piled with paper we wonder how the occupant gets to his or her desk (and been amazed how he or she can yank a needed piece of paper out of a 2-foot pile in 2 seconds). Out-of-line accumulations are not to be defended.

But most of us have multiple projects on the go. We can fantasise about finishing one activity cleanly before going on to the next -- it's a pipe dream. Most professionals' offices provide instant visual evidence of the number of 'things they are currently working on'. Adhering to the time-honoured principle of dealing with any piece of communication (be that an email or a printed memo) immediately is impossible because most responses can't just be constructed here and now. They require some kind of answer or input from a third party (sometimes many, for example when it's necessary to run something by a committee before issuing a reply).

### The press for paper

How come the electronic tools don't seem to make paper unnecessary? OK, you might say that given today's tools, shouldn't it be possible to simply place each open matter on the electronic desktop or virtual workrooms? It

should, but I have never seen anyone operate that way. In my own case, it's a daily occurrence that my eye falls on a piece of paper on my desk and I think, 'Oh yes, I must get to that. And if you, little piece of paper, hadn't reminded me, it would have slipped my mind in the crush of simultaneous to-dos'.

Similarly, the most effective way for me to actually make that phone call I need to make first thing in the morning is to - you guessed it -- put a scribbled paper note smack on top of the keyboard where I cannot avoid finding it as I check the email while the coffee's brewing. Sticky notes on the coffee pot or the bathroom mirror work well, too!

Shouldn't it be possible for work groups to collaborate virtually using the many group-space tools now on the market?



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It should, but in practice, knowledge managers and IT personnel are finding that the virtual collaboration tools tend to go unused.

Again, I'm a perfect example: My professional association offers a communities-of-practice (CoP) tool ... and I cringe every time a notification pops up that the administrator has added a new item: 'Oh no, not again.' Log in, click several times, remember which element of the item to click on to open it, etc. Why couldn't the document in question be sent to me by email as well, thus being but a fraction of a second away from being open? As for, 'Yes, but the entire point here is to get away from email', there are not enough minutes in the day for me to go into the CoP to see if anyone added commentary since the last time I looked!

Alright then. Is it an age-related phenomenon that knowledge workers ignore their computers' storage potential and collaboration tools? Is it the case that while we seasoned professionals don't, younger knowledge workers -- those for whom YouTube is as natural as breathing -- take to the virtual tools because their brains are wired differently, the way Stephen Abram of SirsiDynix tells it? (His presentations on the information handling, social interaction, and learning styles of today's children and teens are very entertaining). Perhaps, and time will tell.

### **Where electronics succeed**

We have evolved, but there's a limit: To give ourselves a little credit, it did occur to me that we have in fact evolved

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along with technology since we mastered those IBM Selectrics. I can still conjure up the look of the typeface balls in my desk drawer and the feel of the snap when the mechanism locked in place. I credit my strong page- layout skills to the need for planning ahead what was going to go where on the page as I typed!

Our habits have developed in step with the world around us. I need only think of the almost-never-used inventory of courier envelopes and pre-printed five-part address forms I originally acquired 15 years ago. Dedicated fax machines and extra phone lines to feed them? The company letterhead I paid so much for back then? No way, not today.

It's a cultural thing: So indeed, we aren't entirely hopeless in terms of adapting to new technologies, and our being from an earlier era is not the reason for our continued use of paper. I

believe certain intrinsic characteristics of paper and certain considerations in social interaction provide a better explanation.

To give a few examples:

- Paper is conveniently portable. It isn't terribly practical to be keeping track of a PDA while loading bananas into the grocery store's produce bag. Give me my scrap-paper grocery list any day. It lies in plain view in the basket or cart as I make my way through the aisles. No squinting, nothing to delete afterwards
- Many types of work lend themselves to being performed over a snack or meal, but only if there's a paper copy. Eating across a keyboard while editing a document or spreadsheet is not, in my view, much of a break. But lunching while proofreading and jotting down the odd correction qualifies
- The window of time we have available may play a role in how we choose to operate. If I have 15 minutes, is it worthwhile to fire up a laptop and open the relevant files (a paper file folder opens and closes a lot faster)? Commuter trains and airport business lounges seem to confirm this assumption. Of those passengers not looking out of the window or reading a newspaper, I generally see about half looking at paper documents while the rest have their laptops open. Eye strain in poor lighting may be a factor here, too
- In my work, I often interview a client's employees in-depth to gain insight

into work processes and information handling. In the interest of the interviewee's sense of trust, I would never think of recording the interview, and in the interest of establishing personal rapport, I would never think of typing into a laptop during the interview. A few discreet notes made by hand in my spiral-bound notebook do not interfere with the flow of conversation and eye contact, and I like to believe my interviewees feel respected through this approach of mine. Having a colleague along who captures comments directly into a laptop is, of course, a good compromise, one I take advantage of whenever possible.

### **Breeding paper**

In effect, I believe paper is a convenient, temporary thinking device. Once that million-dollar idea has been sketched out on the back of an envelope in a bar, the envelope has done its job and can be retired. But not to be filed. Aside from archival protection of irreplaceable material, we do not need to hang on to much historical paper (except, of course, for specific types of materials such as the receipts and financial records the law dictates we must keep for seven years). To wit, I no longer own the filing cabinets I needed 15 years ago. What we do need, of course, are the electronic backup cabinets that keep morphing -- once we used CDs, now it's memory sticks. Next?

But paper just seems to breed! Having thus made my little case for the continued appropriateness of paper in

our daily personal and work lives, I admit paper has a tendency to proliferate and creep across surfaces, seemingly on its own. We have all spent quite enough time turning our desks upside down while muttering, 'I know I printed that document just an hour ago, now WHERE is it?' only to re-print the item and find the first printout, a week later, stapled to the back of something else.

Perhaps I'm not alone in starting most days with neatly organised small stacks of paper, each representing a project or meeting or article I'm working on, only to end the day with crosswise layers having taken over my extremely long desk (custom built, IKEA doesn't sell them that large).

My defence? I'm tidily working on a document on the computer, referring to three others laid out before me, when the phone rings and I need to pull out some material to aid the conversation. The new materials end up on top of my aforementioned three (it's either that, or I'd have to move on to the kitchen island), and before I can re-file them, the phone rings again, etc. In order to be sure to have all the documents I need for tomorrow's meeting ready for packing in the briefcase, I place them on the floor right beside said briefcase. You get the picture. And I know you have already nodded in recognition!

### Dream on

Decades ago, 'the paperless office' was a glorious dream. It still is. It's not going to happen soon. Perhaps it will one day a long, long time from now. Possibly

the creators of the Star Trek series had it right with those pocket-free uniforms. But I wonder ...

P.S.

Coincidentally, the same day I was on the step stool I read a newspaper article <<http://digbig.com/4rbwt>> about Ms. Zhang who built a hugely successful business importing scrap paper from the US to China for use in packaging for exported goods. The fact she is worth more than Oprah tells a tale right there.

Now I'm conscientious recycler -- no piece of paper or cardboard, regardless how tiny, goes in the garbage in my household! For the sake of the trees, I hope every office -- one man operation to multinational -- has in place a comprehensive and effective recycling program. A topic for another day.

### Related FreePint links:

- "What They Say and Do: Practical Tips for Harvesting Reliable User Feedback for Planning" By Ulla de Stricker and Barbie Keiser <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/051006.htm#tips>>
- "The Myth of the Paperless Office" Abigail J. Sellen and Richard H. R. Harper <<http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?ttype=2&tid=8501>>
- "What ever happened to the paperless office?" The Christian Science Monitor <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1212/p13s01-wmgn.html>>



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