

How to Keep Printing Costs As Low As Possible

By Tina Sieber

Let's get this straight – printing e-mails and documents is primeval! Not only does it cost money, it also wastes resources, storage space, and time. In fact, half of all pages printed are never used! And once you have to find something in your printed documents, doesn't it usually take ages? Compare that with a tiny little hard drive (and a second one for your backup) that can store the equivalent of a library and lets you search and find information in light speed. Who still wants to pore over printed documents?

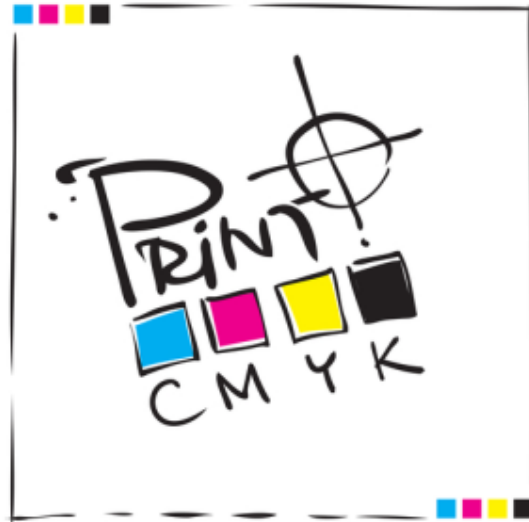
Well, that said, there are of course legitimate reasons to print. Reading text on paper is undeniably different than reading it on a digital screen. You can fold the paper, mark it, make notes, and rip it apart to release your anger. So for all those cases in which you do have to print something, here is an article that will help you save resources and keep the printing costs as low as possible.

Before we dive head-in, let me share my assumptions: I take it for granted that you already own an energy efficient printer. Moreover, I assume that you have researched the best ink, toner, or paper for your printer and purpose.

Save Energy

A printer that is turned on or in stand-by mode and waiting for a print job uses energy. If you hardly ever print anything or if you keep the printer in stand-by mode, even though you know you won't be printing anything for a few hours, for example over night or during the weekend, you are wasting energy. And we all know that energy is getting ever more expensive.

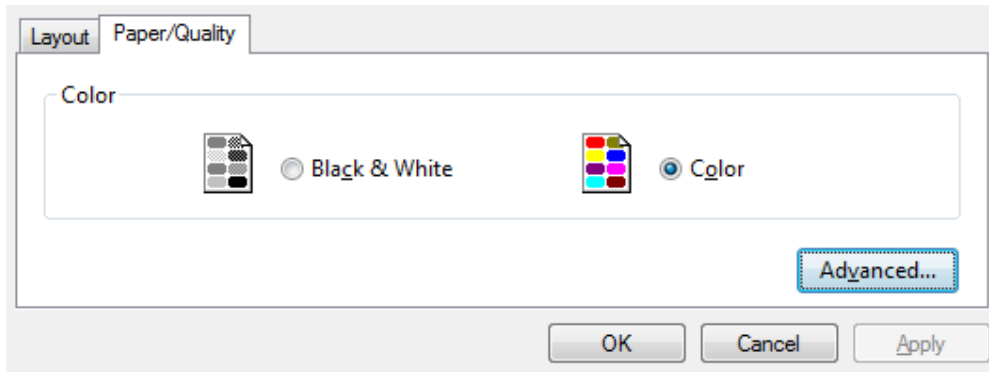
The easiest way to save energy is to turn off your printer whenever you don't need it. Depending on your printer model, custom printer settings may also include options to automatically turn off the printer overnight, during weekends, or after it has been idle for a set amount of time. If you want to save energy in that way, it's worth reading your printer handbook, which probably is available as a PDF online or on the CD that came with your printer.



Save Ink or Toner

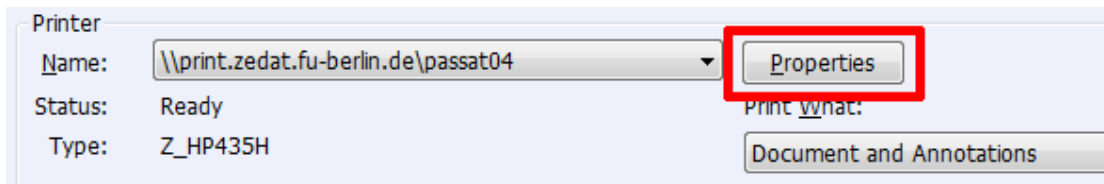
Ink and toner are probably the most expensive printer supplies, hence this is where you can save the most. Also, it's pretty easy to save some money here. First, edit your documents before printing, so that you print only what you really need. Second, print in low quality, unless you really need a high quality print. Finally, print in black & white, unless you really need to print in colour. You can change your printer settings to print less wastefully per default.

The exact options available to you will depend on your printer model. Generally, you can access these options via the Windows *Control Panel* under *Devices and Printers*. Right-click your printer and choose *Printing preferences*. Switch to the *Paper/Quality* tab and choose Black & White. When clicking the *Advanced...* button in the bottom right you can change additional settings, including the *Print Quality* (print resolution in dpi) or *Paper Size*.



Are you using an inkjet printer? Please be aware that a high quality black is often mixed from colours, rather than taken from the black ink cartridge. This can turn out to be a very expensive 'feature' and makes it even more important to print black & white and in a low quality per default.

Whatever options you change in printing preferences, they will be your default options for every print job. However, you can adjust the settings for each individual print job, so you can print in colour or high quality anytime. Simply click the Properties button next to the selected printer before you start a print job. In this same window you can also make some further settings to save paper, which will be our next point.

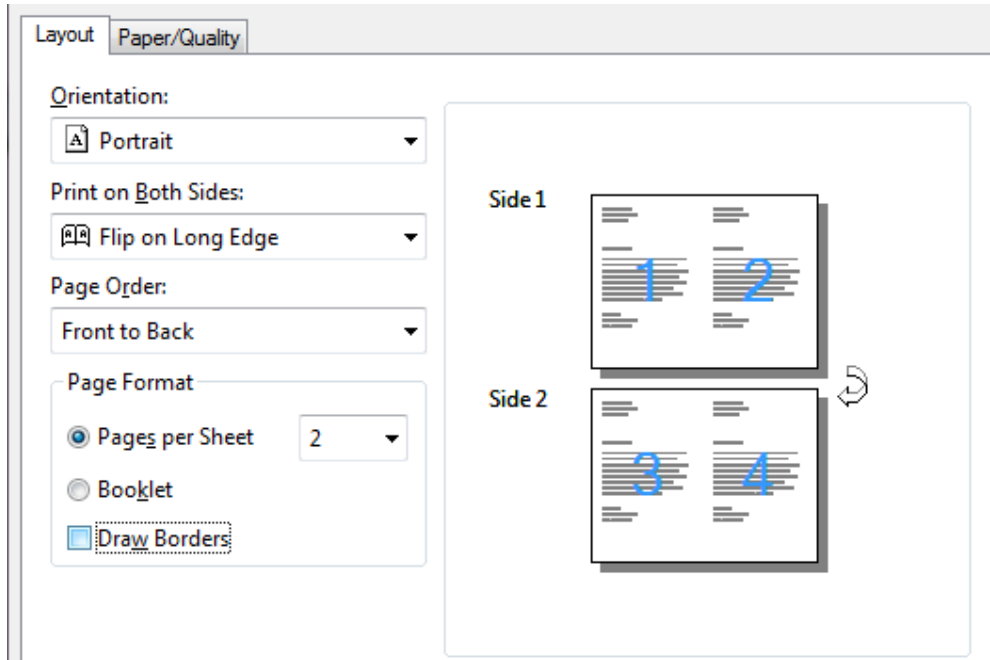


Did you know you could save even more ink by using an ecofont (<http://www.ecofont.com/en/products/green/font/download-the-ink-saving-font.html>)?

Save Paper

Other than not printing to paper, there are many more ways to save paper. First, start by editing your document and its margins to print more per page or remove elements you don't want to print. Second, print only selected pages. Third, print double-sided. Finally, print multiple pages per sheet. Again, you can choose default settings depending on your printer model.

To change the default settings, go to *Devices and Printers* via the *Control Panel*, right-click on your printer and select *Printing preferences*. In the *Layout* tab, see what options are available to you and choose the ones that seem like the best fit.



Know that you can change these settings for every individual print job as described above.

Now if you do end up printing something you don't really need, you can save paper by re-using it. And last but not least, you can recycle it.

Use a Local Print Shop

The most economical way to occasionally print something is to outsource your printing to a local print shop. This typically guarantees you access to a state-of-the-art printer that simply works and produces nothing but awesome quality. And you won't ever have to deal with empty paper bins or clogged up ink cartridges again. Let go of toxic fumes emitted by a laser printer or wasted energy due to a printer in stand-by mode.

Go Paperless

Maybe you are wondering how you would go about going paperless? Well, it's fairly simple and can be summarised in three steps:

- **Print To PDF**
Set your PDF printer as default printer under *Devices & Printers*.
Convert Anything to PDF using PDF995 (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/convert-anything-to-pdf-format-using-pdf995/>)
Print Pages to PDF: Use Firefox To Print Webpages To PDF Files
(<http://www.makeuseof.com/dir/print-pages-pdf-firefox-print-webpages-pdf-files/>)
- **Scan (Digitise) Paper Files**
Go Paperless By Scanning Your Important Documents With Lemon & JotNot [Web & Smartphone] (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/paperless-scanning-important-documents-lemon-jotnot-web-smartphone/>)
- **Use OCR To Turn Scanned Files Into Editable Documents**
The 3 Best Free OCR Tools To Convert Your Files Back Into Editable Documents
(<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/3-free-ocr-tools-convert-files-editable-documents/>)
3 Online OCR Services To Convert Scanned Docs To Text
(<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/3-online-ocr-services-intelligently-scan-documents/>)
Top 5 Free OCR Software Tools To Convert Images Into Text
(<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/top-5-free-ocr-software-tools-to-convert-your-images-into-text-nb/>)

Follow the resources listed under each point to learn more.

For many more great resources on this topic, view the following articles:

- How To Save Printer Ink & Make It Last Longer (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/how-to-make-printer-ink-and-toner-last-longer/>) – special tips for ink printers
- How To Print Multiple Pages On One Sheet Of Paper & Be Eco-Friendly
(<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/print-multiple-pages-one-sheet-paper-ecofriendly/>)
- Manage Printing Costs & Cut Paper Waste By Setting Up A Print Server with PaperCut
(<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/manage-printing-cut-paper-waste-papercut/>)
- 3 Easy Bookmarklets To Print Nice Looking Web Pages Without Craplets
(<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/3-easy-bookmarklets-print-nice-web-pages-craplets/>)
- PrintWhatYouLike- Save Paper & Ink when Printing Web Pages
(<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/printwhatyoulike-helps-you-conserve-paper-ink-and-sanity/>)
- Going Paperless With These 3 iPad & iPhone Handwriting Apps
(<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/going-paperless-with-these-3-ipad-iphone-handwriting-apps/>)
- 5 Steps to Save Paper And Go Digital (<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/5-steps-to-save-paper-and-go-digital/>)

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