

Back in the Pot

Recycled Ink Cartridges



We get reminded to think before we print all the time but we rarely stop to ask why. Well, besides the obvious paper conservation, we need to also consider the ink we use. It does, after all, impact air quality and use up non-renewable resources. So what can we do to print smarter? We can switch to recycled ink. Here's the lowdown.

What It Is

Used empty ink cartridges are returned to the manufacturer where they are cleaned and tested for quality. Passing ink cartridges are refilled with ink and then sold as "recycled" or "remanufactured ink."

The Pros

- Inexpensive
- Reduces the creation of plastic packaging
- Lessens the amount of toxins going into landfills
- One of the greenest options for personal computer ink

The Cons

- Still contains some harmful chemicals
- Nonrenewable resources are used in ink creation
- Quality of the ink can vary

Where to Buy It

You can find recycled ink online or at most stores that sell computer accessories (some of those same places also refill cartridges for you). Those who are really crafty can buy their own kits online and refill cartridges themselves.

How to Recycle It

Before you throw out the packaging from a new cartridge, make sure there isn't a pre-paid stamp inside. Most manufacturers include one to make it easier for customers to send old cartridges back.

As for those empties, you can also take them back to stores such as Staples –they'll even give you a few cents back for your trouble. Chaching!