



# The UK Newspaper Model

Thirteen years ago, the newsprint market in the United Kingdom was in the same situation as the North American market is today, with an industry average of 34% recycled content.<sup>1</sup> With early pressure from the environmental sector, UK newspapers entered into a voluntary agreement with government to establish industry-wide targets for increasing recycled content. The initiative created a guaranteed demand for domestic recovered fibre, thus lessening the need for imported virgin fibre. The goals were incremental: 60% average of recycled content for the end of 2001, 65% by the end of 2003 and 70% by the end of 2006. Remarkably, the sector has surpassed its final goal.<sup>2</sup>

In 2006, that average recycled content hit an all-time high of 80.6%.<sup>3</sup> UK production can barely keep up with the demand for recycled content. Aylesford Newsprint, the UK's first supplier of 100% recycled newsprint, and Ecco Newsprint are both exploring plans to build new operations in the near future.<sup>4</sup> Until those plans become reality, though, turning to increased supply from Canada is appearing to be less and less feasible. It seems that Canada's high virgin content newsprint is becoming unsuitable for the UK market with British newspaper publishers considering the predominantly recycled domestic papers to be of better quality.<sup>5</sup>


In most cases, the UK publishers capitalized on the opportunity to bolster their brands with the recycling initiative by promoting it in all national and regional newspapers. Publishers received meaningful support from the UK pulp industry association, keen to support domestic recovered paper production. As challenges have presented, the industry has campaigned together for change. Their latest obstacle, single-stream recycling (where paper is mixed in with plastics, glass and other recyclable materials) presents serious challenges for newsprint producers looking for a steady supply of clean recovered fibre. In the UK, publishers and paper producers are working together against single-stream collection systems by local authorities.

The UK model clearly illustrates what can be accomplished when companies solidify their environmental commitments with clear targets and collaborate as a sector. Moving forward, UK publishers still need to ensure that their remaining 20% virgin content doesn't originate from endangered forests like Canada's Boreal. However, their successes on recycled fibre should serve as a model for the North American newspaper market.

## One edition's ecological savings


In one day, a typical\* UK newspaper makes the following savings compared to a similar newspaper printed in North America:

Total energy: **41 homes over a year**  
 Greenhouse gases: **88 cars over a year**  
 Wastewater: **1 swimming pool**  
 Solid waste: **13 garbage trucks**  
 Wood use: **4,636 trees**



**30% Recycled**

**North America**



**80% Recycled**

**United Kingdom**

\* 500 tonnes of uncoated groundwood

#### NOTES

1. Pulp and Paper, (1996. December). 'UK Newspaper Target for Reforms.' Available: [findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3636/is\\_199612/ai\\_n8747785](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3636/is_199612/ai_n8747785)
2. The Newspaper Society, (2007). Available: [www.newspapersoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=1254](http://www.newspapersoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=1254)
3. Hooker, Adam, (2007. April 26). "UK newsprint market set for big things", PrintWeek. Available: [www.printweek.com/news/652931/UK-newsprint-market-set-big-things/](http://www.printweek.com/news/652931/UK-newsprint-market-set-big-things/)
4. Hooker, Adam, (2007. April 26).
5. The Newspaper Society, (2007).