

MANAGING YOUR MONEY



Online Bill Pay And E-Bills Make Going Green Easy

(NAPSA)—If you pay at least one bill online, you have lots of company. According to a recent research report, more than two-thirds of online U.S. households do just that. Much of this activity has been driven by the convenience, speed and security of paying and receiving bills online. Consumers know that electronic bills and payments save money and eliminate the hassle of buying stamps. Now a growing number of consumers are paying online because it's better for the environment.

Saving 16.5 Million Trees

If all U.S. households viewed and paid their bills online it would save 16.5 million trees annually and reduce toxic air pollutants by 3.9 billion pounds, similar to having 355,015 fewer cars on the road, according to 2007 research from Javelin Strategy & Research.

Paying bills online means payments no longer have to be physically delivered, reducing fuel consumption and associated emissions. The environmental benefits really add up when the bill delivery side of the equation is added. When a consumer turns off a paper bill and replaces it with an electronic version, it eliminates the need to print a bill, as well as the need to transport a bill from the company to the consumer. Electronic bills, commonly known as e-bills, contain the same information as paper bills and can be received and paid via a bank Web site or directly at a company Web site.

"I started paying bills online through my bank a year ago, but was still receiving all my paper bills in the mail," said Stephani Lidestri of Atlanta. "When I realized that online bill payment could have a real impact on the environment, it was the push I needed to sign up to receive e-bills as well."



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Lidestri claims eliminating the paper clutter from her mailbox and having the ability to view and pay bills all in one place has helped her manage her finances and be more organized. "I'm a convert," she said.

E-Bill Services Offered Free

Most financial institutions offer free online banking and bill payment services. Many of these services include features such as e-mail reminders to alert you when a bill is due and come with security guarantees.

"Receiving and paying bills online is something you might call a 'convenient truth,'" said Eric Leiserson, senior market researcher at CheckFree, a company that supports electronic billing and payment services for nearly 3,000 financial institutions nationwide. "It makes an everyday chore more convenient, and people can feel good about the fact that they are benefiting the environment."

To learn more about e-bills and the positive environmental impact of choosing electronic payments, visit www.payitgreen.org.