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GREEN SCREENS: LOCAL RECYCLING INFORMATION ONLINE

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This column highlights specific actions librarians are taking to keep their libraries green. Readers are invited to notify the column editor of any posters, procedures, policies, articles, speeches, or other material useful for keeping our libraries and institutions environmentally responsible.

Green Screens: Local Recycling Information Online

The subject of computers and their relation to the environment has previously been addressed in several forums. One of the more succinct discussions was generated at the 1992 ALA Social Responsibility Roundtable with Bill Leland of ECONET. Leland questioned whether computer usage was ultimately detrimental or beneficial to the environment. The general consensus at that roundtable indicated that computer usage results in a dramatic increase in paper consumption. But one way that computers can be utilized to benefit the environment is by providing timely information regarding the pragmatics of recycling--the what, where, when, why, and how.

The University of Colorado Online Services Department has terminals liberally located throughout the large campus in Boulder. These terminals access CULINE which provides information for students and faculty on such diverse subjects as the weather, registration, bus schedules, finances, dining hall menus, performances, athletics, library catalogs--and recycling. The opening menu of CULINE offers "recycling" as an option under two headings which can catch the attention of any user.

The opening menu looks like this:

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ACTIVITIES.....Athletics, CEB, Colloquia, Films, Rec  
  Ctr.  
CAMPUS SERVICES..Ralphie, Computing, Jobs, Libraries,  
  Recycling  
COMMUNITY SERVICES...CARL, Gopher, Police, Travel,  
  Weather, RTD  
COMPENDIA.....411, Calendar, FCQ, Finals, Stats,  
  Recycling  
FACULTY/STAFF INFO...AMS, A/P, BCSC, Personnel,. . .  
STUDENT ADMIN INFO...  
CULINE-PLUS.....  
CULINE TOPICS.....
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The two menu items of CULINE which give practical environmental tips are "CAMPUS SERVICES" and "COMPENDIA." Under CAMPUS SERVICES a selection of "CU Boulder Recycling Center" gives two further options: "1.Deskside Recycling Program" and "2.Recycling Stations."

The information offered when the "Deskside Recycling Program" is selected explains how this new program makes recycling on the University of Colorado at Boulder campus convenient for everyone. The program is the product of nearly three years of research and testing by both the student-run CU Recycling and the university's facilities management department. For example, the Desktop Recycling Program provides details on the double-compartment containers for newsprint and white paper that have been placed next to all regular waste baskets on campus. In addition a complete listing of the recycling station locations is available on CULINE under "campus services."

When "recycling" is selected off the "Compendia" option of the CULINE main menu, three items are listed:

1. General Information
2. Recycling Businesses
3. Related Issues

Selection number one "General Information on Recycling" brings up four screens of information specific to the Denver/Boulder area. An example of the information includes:

"It is important that you separate materials properly. Stray materials can interfere with the recycling process. Businesses that collect and sell recycled products often spend a large amount of their budget sorting through improperly separated material. Businesses that do the actual recycling will reject an entire shipment if they see improperly sorted material."

"Office paper must be separated into white and colored piles. Paper is considered white as long as the base color is white (even if it has colored graphics). Staples are ok. Paper up to the thickness of index cards is O.K. Glossy paper, chemically-treated pressure sensitive copy paper and paper with visible fibers in it cannot be recycled."

"Recyclers in Boulder are pretty picky about newspapers. They only accept what comes in the daily paper."

"Only corrugated cardboard can be recycled. Single layer cardboard cannot."

"Certain types of plastic can be recycled. Most plastic containers have a type designation stamped into their bottom side. The easy rule of thumb Recently, sites have stopped accepting saran wrap."

"The most valuable items for recycling are aluminum cans, white office paper and computer paper." The "Recycling Businesses" option tells the user about Eco-cycle, the main recycler in Boulder. It also explains that the University of Colorado takes its recycling to U.S. Recycle in Denver which has different rules than Eco-cycle. Other tidbits include, "You can recycle automobile tires at Firestone and automobile oil at Grease Monkey." When "Related Issues" is selected from CULINE's Recycling menu, a host of great practical ideas are presented: "The key issue in all of this is reducing refuse. In addition to recycling, you can adopt other lifestyle changes that produce less refuse. Avoid buying overpackaged products. Buy food in bulk and store

it in your own permanent containers, rather than buying bagged and boxed foods. Buy milk in returnable bottles (available at Alfalfa's, Wild Oats, King Soopers / not available at Safeway's)."

Other paragraphs explain composting, the Boulder Energy Conservation Center, and mass transit. One interesting paragraph reminds, "Be aware that claiming to be environmentally minded is becoming a business tactic nowadays. Although many businesses are genuinely trying to be more conscientious, many businesses make bogus claims about how their products are recyclable, non-damaging to the environment, etc."

The computer era now offers Boulder residents quick and efficient access to information about eco-lifestyles. As librarians we should encourage such use and inclusion of local recycling information in databases such as CULINE. Any interested readers desiring to take a look at CULINE may do so through the Internet. The telnet address is [CULINE.COLORADO.EDU 852](telnet://CULINE.COLORADO.EDU.852), or a [gopher](#) can be used to examine this fine example of computers helping us to stay green.