

## Writing Sample - GigaOm

### 7 GREEN TIPS FOR THE PAPERLESS PROFESSIONAL

*Editor's note: This is the first in a series of [Green Tips](#) posts, a collaboration between [WebWorkerDaily](#) and our sister site, [Earth2Tech](#).*

Going paperless is now a realistic option to making your work life more friendly on the planet and more efficient in general. From web-based faxing, to replacing all mail with email, to toting around your own coffee mug, the benefits of eliminating paper can both preserve natural resources and save you money. Ditching excess paper can also streamline many business practices, eliminating clutter and adding searchability, data protection and ubiquitous access. Here are seven tips to get you started on your green paperless office.

#### 1. Faxing & Mail

Bring faxing into the digital age. [Web-based faxing services](#) have been around for a while, and services out there include [GreenFax](#), [Drop.io](#) and [MyFax](#). To make the most out of these variously priced fax capabilities, be sure to make a digitized version of your pen and ink signature on a transparent background. The next time you need to sign something and fax it back, you'll be all set to do it without ever printing.

Services that convert paper mail to email don't actually help to save paper, and some have faced privacy concerns. But the innovative [Zumbox](#) offers an electronic alternative to your physical mailbox. Users can send the electronic files of would-be snail mail pieces directly to your Zumbox, just by knowing your street address. Businesses can also pay to contact target customers within certain geographic areas with special offers. While Zumbox needs to build momentum to really be useful — as they need a critical mass of both senders and recipients to work well — it's a concept that has been proven by postal services in other countries.

Most mailed paper bills can be eliminated with e-billing. Opting out of direct marketing (i.e. junk mail) and pre-approved credit card offers (call 1-888-5-OPTOUT) will also help reduce the amount of dead trees coming into your mailbox.

#### 2. Invoicing

You don't have to just receive e-bills, but you can generate them, too. Invoicing software like [QuickBooks](#) generates invoices that you can email. there are plenty of "freemium" online options

too, including [Freshbooks](#), [Cashboard](#) and [CurdBee](#), or for a really simple solution, try the [Google Calendar Invoice Creator](#).

### 3. Schedules & Calendars

Calendars and agendas can be hard to let go of in physical form, but the advantages of going paperless can ease the pain. With [Google Calendar](#), MS Outlook and Apple's iCal your schedule is available and up-to-date wherever you go. Online task managers like [Google Tasks](#) and [Remember the Milk](#) can keep you on top of all of your to-do lists for a project without using a scrap of paper.

### 4. Mobile Tools

Your cell phone can be one of the easiest tools to help you banish the paper build up. A variety of iPhone, Android and BlackBerry apps allow you to invoice ([Freshbooks](#)), manage tasks ([Task2Gather](#)), handle scheduling ([Tungle](#) and [TimeBridge](#)) and remotely back up your files ([SugarSync](#)). Better yet, apps such as [DocScanner](#), [JotNot](#), and [WorldCardMobile](#) turn your phone into a document or business card scanner, getting rid of the need to bring paper back home with you. Online service [Qipit](#), which is also available as an iPhone app, allows you to use any cameraphone (or plain digicam for that matter) to make digital copies of whiteboards or documents.

### 5. Digitizing What You Can't Avoid

Try as you might to avoid eliminating paper, chances are you will get stuck with some sort of paper that you need to keep on file. A number of services can help get the paper clutter out of your office and into the cloud. [Shoeboxed](#) and [OfficeDrop](#) both make scanned versions of hard copies that you send them by mail, and customers can also upload files to the services for offsite storage.

If you prefer to do the scanning yourself, there are a few hardware options that are worth the investment. The Fujitsu ScanSnap combination of auto-feed document scanner and integrated software wins raves reviews from users. The retro-futuristic [Neat Receipts](#) and cute-but-functional [Doxie](#) both offer more portable scanning with OCR and cloud-based storage integration.

### 6. Storage

Backing up all of the important documents you've just digitized is a no-brainer. You can use [Mozy](#) (available in "Home" and "Pro" flavors for a fee), [DropBox](#) (up to 2Gb free) or [LiveMesh](#) (up to 5GB free) to move your important files to the [more energy efficient](#) cloud.

### 7. Where You Least Expect It

If you really get ambitious about phasing out paper from your daily routines, you can try some extra steps. Replace your sticky notes with reusable adhesive dry-erase sheets. Also consider eliminating

the paper from your morning coffee ritual with reusable filters and a travel mug, instead of the paper cups from the café. Finally, if there's still paper you just can't cut out of your life; reuse it as scratch paper, recycle it or add it to your compost.

*What technology or tactics do you use to avoid using paper? Share your answers in the comments.*