

Title:

Do We Really Need Ink?

Word Count:

455

Summary:

You might not think about it on the pages of your books, or newspapers, but without the ink, there wouldn't be anything but blank sheets of paper. Ink can be taken for granted, but its value is beyond question, and sometimes very evident.

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Article Body:

You might not think about it on the pages of your books, or newspapers, but without the ink, there wouldn't be anything but blank sheets of paper. Ink can be taken for granted, but its value is beyond question, and sometimes very evident.

The original inks in the dawn of what we know as 'printing' were composed of simple elements. Natural products like nut shell oils and the defensive liquid of the squid made useful dyes that were funneled into the old 'nib' tips of pens long before the ball-point and felt tip revolutionized handwriting. These days, inks have chemical additives meant to protect the ink from smearing or fading away, as technology aids the printing process. From the gigantic volume of glossy advertising reaching your mailbox, it seems that ink is being poured onto reams of paper each day in vivid, eye-catching combinations, and in recent times people have begun to see ink prices climb.

Did the ancient traders of the natural inks and dyes charge an arm and a leg for those useful fluids? In any case, the problem of affordable ink is growing, particularly since household printers became common. It seems like every house has a printer, but everyone complains of shelling out the money to refill this amazing machine with the simple stuff that it needs to print on paper. The fine

machinery of the modern printer is useless without ink.

Owners of these dormant machines have several options. They can buy the new refills, which are sometimes exorbitantly expensive, or they can buy another printer. In a surprising number of cases, people have found new printers at prices below those of ink refill cartridges. This has a lot to do with the complexity of marketing, but it also underscores how important and valuable ink is in printing.

Now some companies have come up with another choice; users can refill the ink cartridge itself at a discounted rate. Dealers apparently buy ink in bulk and dispense it efficiently. New problems of consumer demand necessitate such complexities. Cartridges, for example, are made with built-in sensors that can indicate an empty cartridge before all of the available ink has run out.

Another innovation is soy ink, which is a more natural alternative to petroleum-based inks that aids in the recycling of the printed material. Alternative inks like soy can make the pricing of ink more flexible and give the consumer more choices in a market that has become considerably complex. Gone are the days of standard refill containers and easy office stocking. These days, it pays to consider your choices very carefully when it comes to that crucial liquid packed into a vial, bottle or cartridge. Ink has definitely become a valuable commodity.