

Printing services fail to meet student needs



John Hitzel

If you are like me, you print a lot. You probably have a cheap printer in your room that runs out of ink at the least convenient times, so you do most of your printing at the more-reliable Pickler Memorial Library. You also get ripped off constantly by the library's printing account system.

I am an English major, so I print incessantly. I like to read paper things instead of pixel things, mostly because I think it's better for my eyes, which are more important to me in this instance than being green. I also like turning pages. Sometimes

I get excited and print before I've proofread my work, which requires further printing. I know I revise better with a pen than with a keyboard, so I print off most of my assignments with lots of warts before I polish the final copy, which necessitates more printed pages.

Whenever you print something at the library, the first mostly-blank page bearing your Truview ID costs you ten cents. You can't even duplex print it and save three cents a page, although the new duplex printing option isn't a perfect solution either. You'd think, since you're printing on both sides of one sheet of paper, you would be rewarded for saving paper. Nope. You get charged 7 cents per side — 14 cents per sheet. So one piece of paper costs 4 cents more. Maybe Truman is charging for the extra toner here instead of the paper? Well, that mostly blank page that accompanies every instance of printing costs 10 whole cents, so toner is not

the issue either.

A ream of 500 sheets of plain old HP printer paper costs \$7.77 on the Wal-Mart website. That's approximately 64 sheets on the dollar; and less than 2 cents spent per sheet of paper. Even if we don't use this kind of cheap paper, it's obvious that some of my print money isn't going toward printing. What are the extra cents paying for? Fuel for the Department of Public Safety cars to troll around, looking for \$50 parking tickets to assign? Repairs on the emergency lights? Baldwin Hall's overzealous heaters? Or do we just insist on high-quality printer paper here at the Harvard of the Midwest, like we do with our students?

Although the identifier page is questionably necessary, it becomes useless almost immediately. Most often it gets thrown away or recycled. Recently, I've started keeping mine and feeding them to my home printer, cutting them down for origami or

doodling on them. Might as well — they're paid for.

The identifier sheet is dumb because every time I print only one page, I get charged for two. You can go through your whole printing account in half the time like this. I have refunded mine twice this semester.

I could avoid this dilemma via some inventive copying and pasting, text-resizing and margin-fudging, such as creating a single document and copying all the one-pagers into it in really small text with no margins. Sometimes this is a solution, although it looks absurd and is impractical once the page is in my hands. It doesn't work with Adobe Acrobat documents, either.

As long as we're wasting money, it would be neat if a portion of the fee for these single-sheet account-drainers could be saved up and put toward some other expense that students incur on campus, like a fund for extra dining dollars, paying

off parking tickets, Student Health Center fees or overdue book charges. It might be better simply to charge everyone a flat fee accompanying tuition for printer usage, like the Student Recreation Center fee. Although I hardly ever use the rec center, I still get charged every semester for potentially using it. But I don't gripe about that because it helps out the other students who use the rec center a lot, and it's there if I want to use it.

We're a smart-kid school. Let's be smart about this. A flat fee would help out the students who have to print a lot, and I doubt people would mind one in exchange for printer access. I'd think the heavy-printing students would be balanced by the light-printers. It's certainly better than paying for a blank page.

John Hitzel is a senior communication and English major from St. Louis, Mo.

AROUND THE QUAD

Are you satisfied with printing services?



"No, I'm out of money in my printing account and am required to print numerous surveys for class."

Kim Bauer
senior



"Yes, but I think some majors need larger accounts and teachers should accommodate printing needs."

Sarah Engle
junior



"It's okay, but it is confusing. I wasn't sure if the printing money carried over from each semester."

Adaeze Chukwu
sophomore



"I don't have a problem with the accounts, but I don't like that the dorm printers are only black and white."

Suzanne Heddinghaus
sophomore

Show-me less representatives, Missouri



Bryce Osman

Since the mid-term elections passed, a large amount of focus has been put on the nation-wide political races. Not to be overlooked, though, are the many state elections for representatives and senators that also were held.

Missouri boasts 163 members in its House of Representatives, even more than the heavily populated states of California and Texas. In fact, Missouri has more representative districts than it does counties.

Representative districts are drawn according to population. This may be the main reason why the state has such a large quantity, because its two largest cities, St. Louis and Kansas City, are located on the state's eastern and western borders and have large suburbs surrounding them. This distance gives the state an interesting dynamic that few other states possess. Yet, as a voter belonging to this state, I need to ask: Do we really need this many representatives?

In some people's views, a plethora of representatives is an advantage for the government because more people are talking and deliberating with one another, which

results in better laws. However, this can be a double-edged sword. While the state elects a large number of representatives, there is a significant possibility that greater partisanship will result, which means that less legislation gets passed and representatives stick to their ideological leanings, failing to work in unison.

With fewer representatives, the entire legislative process would be quicker. Debates about bills would be more focused, rather than having 60 or 70 representatives wanting to put in their two cents. This would show citizens that the government is capable of producing results quickly, rather than working at the snail's pace we have become accustomed to.

Fewer representatives would also favor the lobbying process. Lobbyists would be able to inform more representatives, rather than try to explain a very broad issue to 163 representatives in two or three sentences.

With a smaller number of representatives, the voting process would be much smoother for citizens, especially those living in the cities of St. Louis and Kansas City. Within some of those areas, there are many smaller districts, which can confuse citizens about who is actually running in their district. With larger districts, citizens would have a better understanding of the candidates running in their districts.

Having such a large number of representatives is also a financial hindrance to the state. Many members of the House made \$35,000

for their service for roughly only five months from early January to early May, according to the Missouri Revised Statutes of 2005. If the state were to cut some of these representative positions, it would provide some financial relief that could be used in other areas. It is important to take note that many, if not all of these representatives, hold jobs somewhere in their home district when the House is not in session, and thus are not solely dependent on being a representative as their primary source of income.

There are a few possible solutions to this overrepresentation problem. Redistricting could make the representative districts larger. Another solution is a grassroots lobbying campaign supporting the idea that fewer representatives would lead to a better government. Lastly, a representative could propose a bill to the House, arguing for fewer representatives. However, this solution might be illogical, as representatives would not likely vote themselves out of office and out of a job.

The drawbacks to having too many representatives heavily outweigh the advantages. The Show-Me state should show us fewer representatives because with government, as with everything, bigger is not always better.

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Thought must precede climate change action



Connor Stangler

Unemployment worries me. The national debt troubles me. Poverty disturbs me. But the prospect of a gradual apocalypse, of an indiscriminate global crisis, does not seem to frighten me like it should. The climate change crisis is no less significant than these issues, but I can't seem to grant it the importance it deserves. Why?

In the December 2010 issue of "The Atlantic," journalist James Fallows wrote about the "inevitability of coal" as a — if not the — solution to our aggravated global climate crisis. For someone as comfortably unaware of this problem as I am, the first few pages of this article will leave you gasping for increasingly precious oxygen.

The problem is not a lack of solutions. Brilliant scientists, wealthy corporations and even innovative citizens have conceptualized creative means to curb the destructive human effect on the environment. But these solutions are, at best, piecemeal. What we lack is a sense of scale. The vastness of climate change escapes the reach of our mental faculties — for now.

Some background is necessary. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas. Buildup of this gas in the atmosphere will cause a trapping of the sun's energy (as opposed to it radiating back into space), thus warming the planet. Global human activity emits 37 billion tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year — 12 billion a year more than 25 years ago.

Fallows explains that although controversy surrounds the connection between this buildup and subsequent climate change, enough anxiety centers on the problem of "positive feedback," which means the warmer the Earth gets now, the faster it will get hotter in the future. For example, as the polar ice caps melt, there will be less white ice surface to reflect the sun's rays and more blue water to absorb them. Thus, the warming process will accelerate. The effects will include severe heat waves, more frequent and deadlier hurricanes, longer droughts and rising sea levels endangering coastal cities such as Miami, New York and Shanghai.

We are environmentally disoriented. We hope that an incoherent mix of solar panels, wind turbines, nuclear power plants and biofuels can stall our fate. Granted, not one of these energy forms alone will save our planet. And it's not simply a matter of turning off an unnecessary light. Legislators and innovators speak of a more comprehensive, coordinated solution to the crisis. We certainly need something like that, but are we ready for it?

Before we can appreciate the severity of the circumstances, this country's citizens need a fundamental overhaul in the way they think about the problem. I cannot grasp the immensity of the problem because my mind cannot conceive a figure like 37 billion and my sequestered existence in northern Missouri does not allow me to see the immediate effects of such a phenomenon. It seems pretty hot in the summer; but because I do not witness the melting of glaciers, I put "fixing the environment" on tomorrow's to-do list. Until the Netherlands no longer exists or water starts making its way up to the Empire State Building's doorstep, I will remain insufficiently informed of the problem.

In order to reach a level of cognitive that will ensure the future safety of the ecosystem, I will have to alter the way I think about climate change. I will need to begin to comprehend the scale of the damage and its effects. This is not just a matter of acknowledging statistics or filling blogs and the nightly news programs with frightening stories. It will require a break from my default setting. My normal mindset encourages me to pass the responsibility to future generations. But future America is not home to infinitely more sensible or far-sighted people. They will be just as greedy and complacent as we are today. If they are any more aware than us, it will be because they will witness the first globally destructive consequences.

This change will not come in a thirty-minute orientation session. It will require a tangible education as well as a more abstract alteration of our consciousness. It will be much harder than any political obstacle we might confront. We might find climate change to be one of the most scientifically and mentally defining crises of this century.

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Productivity should be determined by seasons



Zach Vicars

If you have a second, step outside and take in your surroundings. Although the calendar hasn't made it official, winter is all around us. The trees have dropped their leaves, the birds have flown south and the squirrels have started to hide away with their stockpiles of acorns. Everything is slowing down.

But as you step back inside, everything seems to be speeding up. Term papers are due. Finals are almost here. Group projects can't be put off any longer. And we have only one week of school left to prepare. Add the stress of the holidays, and this could very well be the busiest part of the year.

Clearly, our behaviors and lifestyles are out of sync with the created order. When the world around us is coming into a season of rest, we are entering a season of chaos. You might say this unseasonal paradox is just the way the world works, but this hasn't always been the case — and it doesn't have to be today.

Traditionally, human beings patterned their lives after the seasons that surrounded them. During winter, as the sun began to sink lower in the sky and the plants became dormant, humans would spend more time inside by the fire, at rest from a hard year's work. Because much of the earth's productivity had ceased, our ancestors hibernated in ways not so different from our furry friends the bear and the squirrel.

This intimate relationship with the seasons still exists for some people today: Farmers, builders and other outdoor professionals usually have a time of rest during the winter. I have family who still spend much of the warmer months chopping up wood

and tending to their property so that they can rest peacefully during the cold season. Some recreational activities — such as hunting, alpine skiing and water sports — still are dependent on the seasons. However, because we no longer depend on the weather, our society has largely rejected the compulsion of the seasons.

Of all the seasons, we have ignored winter the most. The season demands that we slow down, take time to relax and allow our bodies much-needed rest. And yet we have allowed a greedy economy and a backward academic system to rob us of that opportunity to thrive.

As students, we might have it worst of all: During the next two weeks, final papers, projects and exams will be flooding in. An entire semester's worth of effort hangs in the balance. In many cases, more than half of a class grade will be determined in the next 15 days. All semester has just been preparation for this short burst of frantic activity. In order to meet this unseasonal rush, we'll shatter our sleep schedules,

spend less time with friends and enter a state of campus-wide panic.

While everything around us — the days, the plants, the animals — are slowing down, we are just beginning to rev up. This is a tragic flaw in our society, and it greatly contributes to the dysfunction and even depression we experience during the winter months. However, we have the ability to reverse this trend. As our society grows in consciousness of how we relate to the environment, we also must allow the environment to relate to us.

No matter what the season, we should be neither lazy nor panicked. Rather, we should allow the seasons to influence our productivity. In the spring, when the days are lengthening, the temperature is increasing, and life is shooting up from the ground, we too should experience a burst of vitality and productivity.

In the summer, the long, warm days should be utilized with meaningful work, and the temperate nights ought to be spent with friends. In the fall, we should again work hard, pre-

paring for the winter. But as we enter into winter, we should spend time studying, preparing and contemplating. Human beings need some break from the rabid activity that is typical of our existence.

To some, this unity with the seasons might seem impractical, but there certainly is nothing practical about the way humans have broken the natural order: Imagine if farmers never had time to consider how they would cultivate their fields, or builders never took time to consider the houses they were going to construct. Fortunately, winter provides them that season of preparation. Now imagine how much more productive you would be if you used winter as a season to prepare for your studies, your job — even your life.

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