This blog is made from 100% recycled material

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Why recycle?

Recycling can conserve natural resources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save energy, and reduce waste and pollution.[1] Certainly, cleaning and sorting all those food containers can be tiresome (unless you happen to like that sort of thing), but isn't it all worth it in the end?

Has recycling been effective?

Globally, increased rates of recycling have failed to offset the increased rates of primary production[2] that are driven by population growth, economic prosperity, urbanisation, and increased use of novel materials such as plastics.[3]
So why aren't we recycling more?

- Household recycling rates in the UK have been mostly flat, 40% to 45%, for the past fifteen years.[4]
- While glass, steel and aluminium are easy and cost-effective to recycle, plastic is not, with only PET and HDPE commonly recycled. Electronic waste is complex to recycle.[5]

"We must not stop recycling, but we must have an honest and balanced discourse about [it]," – Flore Belingen, Zero Waste France[6]

'Circular Economy' – a system where materials never become waste, but instead are reused, recycled, or otherwise remain in use.

'Doughnut Economics' – a framework for balancing social foundations with environmental impact.

'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' – by focussing on recycling, are we neglecting the other two?

Why aren't we recycling more?

Recycling is complex, energy-intensive, produces its own forms of pollution, and is often costlier than producing from scratch. Many materials are impossible to recycle. Even plastics and paper have limited recyclability, reducing in quality (downcycling) at each round. All this means that, even with improvements in kerbside collection and consumer effort, recycling faces diminishing returns.

Does the enthusiasm for recycling have a dark side?

It has been argued that the more we rely on waste to be recycled, the less concerned we are about our increasing consumption. This may divert our focus away from limiting both the production of materials that are single-use, or in practice not recycled, and the economic incentives of businesses that produce these materials.[6,7]

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