



CLEANING

UP THEIR

ACT

The landscape for buying and selling printer cartridges is set to change forever.

BY JANE SMITH

The landscape for buying and selling printer cartridges is set to change forever with the introduction of two key pieces of legislation.

Both look to be playing into the hands of the compatibles manufacturers and forcing original manufacturers to raise their game and change their marketing strategies.

The first is the WEEE directive. This directive becomes law in summer 2005 but already it's time for dealers to understand its implications. WEEE stands for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive and requires dealers and manufacturers to take responsibility for the environmentally friendly disposal of office equipment. It's designed to encourage the collection, treatment, recycling and recovery of waste electrical and electronic equipment. It makes producers responsible for financing most

of these activities (producer responsibility). Private householders are to be able to return WEEE without charge. There are targets for recycling and recovery of materials and components from the separately collected waste (including printer cartridges).

Ironically, compatible manufacturers have been collecting spent laser and inkjet cartridges for recycling for years and have had to fight the arguments from original manufacturers who have been marketing the benefits of brand new cartridges. It's been confusing enough for consumers as it is trying to work out the pros and cons and the differences between 'compatible' products, 'new builds', 'rebuilt' and goodness knows what builds.

As we have so often pointed out, get the machine out there and reap the rewards from



the steady revenue stream generated from their consumables. So what now? The compatibles manufacturers now have the opportunity to reassert the benefits of recycling in light of the directive and have the technical expertise to produce high quality 'recycled' or 'rebuilt' products. The original manufacturers on the other hand are now putting strategies in place to collect their own cartridges and do what? Will we see them wanting to recycle their own products and brand them, or will we see collaborative manufacturing?

There is massive controversy and complexity in how this is all going to pan out, and at USP magazine we'd like to throw down the gauntlet to all consumables manufacturers and ask them to come to us to explain their perspective on this new but very important new development in their marketplace.

PAGE YIELD AND THE COST OF OWNERSHIP

Another area close to the hearts of our readers and your customers and one that has been covered by us a number of times is that of page yield and the true cost of ownership. This is a methodology used to demonstrate the cost of a particular inkjet or laser printer over its life, taking into account the number of pages that will be printed and how much the cartridges will cost and yield. It has also been used to compare technologies eg laser printer costs versus photocopiers. There are various manual and

auto-automated forms for calculating and monitoring output but there has been a level of subjectivity in the figures used to estimate page yield from printer cartridges due to a lack of standard comparison methods. So the other key directive we wanted to draw your attention to is ISO/IEC 19752 – rigorous technical testing. This kind of directive has been on the cards for a while and was approved on 15th June. It will provide an international standard for measuring mono toner print cartridge yield and is the first stage in the roll out of a standard measurement that by the end of next year will also cover colour ink and toner.

ISO/IEC 19752 will not provide a definitive analysis of print costs, as users and organisations have varying print needs and ink coverage, but cartridge manufacturers will be able to show that their methodology for calculating page yield follows an international standard. The standard will be welcomed by consumers who have been confused by the lack of clarity

and aggressive sales messages in the market. The standard will extend across the whole sector including the compatibles manufacturers and from previous discussions with them they will find this new directive refreshing and welcome as it will only enhance their sales messages rather than detract from them.

Of course the principles behind TCO are to look at the type of content that is being produced and how this will influence costs. How the printer is used bears a direct relationship on the performance of the cartridge. The difference now though is that there is an international standard of measurement to follow. ■

THIS NEW STANDARD TESTING FOLLOWS THESE BASIC PRINCIPLES

- >> **A standard test document, printed in a controlled environment with printer default settings**
- >> **A minimum number of nine of each cartridge is tested to give the lowest predicted yield with statistical confidence**
- >> **Cartridges and printers used represent those available to customers on the open market**
- >> **A minimum of three cartridges are tested on three different printers to avoid bias due to printer variability**
- >> **The printing environment is controlled and consistent, as temperature and humidity variations affect yield**
- >> **Objectivity (probably the most important) because of worldwide and industry wide participation the testing criteria reflect objectivity in developing a reliable and rigorous standard.**

