

MediaPack

The international business magazine for media packaging

ISSUE NO 22: SPRING 2008

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Greening up the media packaging industry

Jim Henson (as the voice of Kermit the Frog) said it best with "It's not easy being green". Today, everywhere we turn we are being urged to take personal responsibility for climate change, global warming and the depletion of natural resources. These urgings take the form of anything from education to 'knee-jerk' legislation but, whatever form they take, there is no escaping that we are all expected to do our bit as individuals, as corporations, and as industries.



Packaging is one industry that has come under severe scrutiny, and even attack; similarly, plastic is now a major bad guy however you look at it. How does that affect media packaging?

First of all, the optical media industry generally has always been pretty 'green', with recycling being very much the norm with polycarbonate and metals being reused as a matter of course. Media packaging is also green in the sense that it is not the same as the layers and layers of progressively stubborn cardboard and plastic that surround many consumer electronic devices. It is part of the product, and the continuing demand for special packaging shows how important it is for consumers of optical media.

These are all topics on which I touched in the last *MediaPack* editorial, so I'll get off my soap box and commend the developers and makers of media packaging for their concerted efforts to make this an even greener industry. Companies are either moving from plastic to paper (though the paper versus plastic topic appears to be a slightly touchy one for many people) or moving to recycled and recyclable plastic. A huge effort is being put into finding and using sustainable materials, and to making working and manufacturing practices as green as possible.

This entire issue is a testament to all the work that the media packaging industry has put into being green – and it really isn't easy. From content owners to designers and through to the makers of media packaging, there are issues to be resolved, materials and processes to develop – and a balance to be kept between retail pressure and pricing issues.

As ever, we have highlighted the creativity and appearance of packaging as well – as well as being green, packaging continues to be the glamorous face of optical media.

Elizabeth Toppin, Editor