



The Greta Thunberg Effect

Will OEMs develop more eco-friendly products in response to the younger generation's concerns for the environment?

The speech given by Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg at the Climate Action Summit held at the United Nations headquarters in New York in September captured the imagination of people around the world. Climate change is contributing to more intense weather, and glaciers are starting to disappear, and both are accelerating.

Thunberg told the world leaders, "We are at the beginning of a mass extinction, and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!"

Even if we accept the threat of climate change, many people still see it as just one problem among many that deserve more serious attention. And even though companies are engaging initiatives to cope with environmental changes, some are only doing it as long as the costs are not too high.

As four million young people around the world gathered and marched in solidarity with Thunberg, she boldly stated, "We will never forgive you, if such current situations are failed to be dealt with."

Increasing evidence appears to be converting those who were indifferent to the global environment and driving those who feel the need to adopt environmental measures to further action. For example, the imaging industry has been working on environmental measures such as reducing CO2 emissions of its products for some time. The power consumption of MFPs and printers have been significantly re-

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Toshiba TEC's Paper Resusing System, Loops, including the MFP LP50 (left) and erasing machine (RD301) (right).

duced thanks to the International Energy Star Project. Market interest is likely to increase for products that address environmental initiatives as awareness of the impact of climate change spreads.

One company addressing these environmental issues is Toshiba TEC. The company has developed Loops, (U.S. models e-STUDIO307LP and e-STUDIO RD301), an MFP that prints on paper using an eras-

able blue toner. According to Toshiba TEC, organizations that use this technology can decrease paper consumption by about one-tenth. This technology can also help lower CO2 emissions by reducing the need to harvest trees for paper production and by reducing the energy used in the papermaking process. Loops won the prestigious EcoPro Awards in Japan in 2018.

Epson is doing its part as well. The company released a dry papermaking

machine called PaperLab, a system that recycles paper from printed documents by defibrating the printed paper into

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particles, removing the toner, and then creating a clean sheet of white or color paper. Focusing on reducing power consumption, the company has developed and is marketing the LX-1000F and LX7000F (U.S. model WorkForce Enterprise), high-speed inkjet MFPs that output at 100 pages per minute (ppm). These devices require approximately 1/8 of the power consumption needed to power a laser device. PaperLab won the Economy, Trade, and Industry Minister’s Prize at EcoPro 2018, Japan’s environmental exposition. The LX-1000F and LX7000F were awarded the Director-General’s Prize from The Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, as part of the fiscal year 2018 Grand Prize for Excellence in Energy Efficiency and Conservation (Product Category & Business Model Category) awards program, sponsored by the Energy Conservation Center in Japan, with support from the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry.

Inkjet MFPs such as those sold by HP and Canon are also designed to consume less power than laser MFPs, making them more environmentally friendly. Wherever there is a concern for the environment, these products will be in the spotlight. Until now, even if the environment is considered important, factors such as image quality, ease of use, and low cost are still most critical to buyers. However, Thunberg’s speech may have raised public interest in environmental measures, which will make it easier to sell these eco-friendly products.

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Epson’s dry-type paper machine PaperLab A8000 (Japanese model number)



Epson’s low-power consumption inkjet MFP WorkForce Enterprise LX-1000F (Japanese model number)