

Critical Review on Digital Reading

The report written by group 5 is a comparative LCA about the environmental impacts of reading documents on printed paper or on a computer. The topic is really interesting and relevant, since more and more information is given on computers and it is up to the students to choose if they want to print or not. In general, the report is well written, as well as structurally consistent and connected. The structure follows the given instructions for the course, and the report is logical and easy to follow. The introduction and the motivation for why this study is needed is very well done. The LCA process is of course simplified, but the modeling actions done are well thought-out and motivated.

While it is a good report in general, there are some areas where it is possible to improve. One is that there are no clear objectives established for the project. However, the set goals and the research questions are consistent with the results and objectives, so the benefit would just be that the structure would be improved slightly. A minor note is that the abstract is a bit long and reads like another introduction.

The motivations and argumentation for why different choices has been made or why something has been neglected are included in the report. However, one area that could have been described in more detail is the the choices around the waste scenarios, such as what kind of scenario and which type of allocation has been chosen and why. For example, on page 10, it feels unmotivated why the computer allocation is set to 66%. Further, it can be motivated better why you do not use weighting in your LCA.

Another recommendation is that the authors should look over some language and consistency aspects. For example, it is recommended to avoid abbreviations such as "doesn't", as well as words such as infinitesimally and tremendously which are not scientific. The authors also talks about themselves in third person, which is not good scientific language either.

One consistency aspect that could be worth looking over is the usage of footnotes. Some of the comments could either be deleted or inserted into the text itself. On pages 9 and 10 links and sources are inserted as footnotes. This looks like an inconsistent inclusion of some Oxford system references, and should be changed to Harvard style references like in the rest of the report. The Harvard notes are also slightly inconsistent. Sometimes they are placed before and sometimes after the dot, and sometimes placed directly in the text but without brackets around the year.

You have written EEE in the report but not mentioned what the shortening stands for, we recommend you to write out the whole meaning of it the first time you mention it. Another thing that should be consistent is the writing of PDF, either with upper or lower case. Other inconsistencies are the numbering of tables and figures, which switches between counting tables and figures together and separately. For example, the first table is called 3.1, the next image is then called 3, and the next tables are called 4.1 and 4.2.

Several things has been excluded, such as the production of paper and the waste scenario of the printer. Some of these things could likely have been assumed instead of excluded. In the report, there is a reference to a small study made on some students, about of the time it takes to read a page. It would be great if you put the results from it in Appendix so the reader could follow the reasoning and see the different results from different persons. Also a nice addition to the report would have been the characterisation graphs to get a clearer picture of the main environmental contributions of the two life cycles. The sensitivity analysis would have been easier to interpret if the comparison graphs of the changes were included.

To conclude, it is a really nice and well written report. Most of the suggestions about improvements are small and simple things, since the base report and modeling are well done. With the changes we have presented here we think that report can be a little bit better.