Worldwide, in 2002, 6.6% of municipal waste produced was recycled. Recycling means reusing ‘waste’ in the production process. ‘Waste’ implies that something is useless, but recycling implies that it is still useful.

Those territories where much waste is recycled are mainly in North America, Western Europe, but also include Japan and the Republic of Korea. Despite this, the non-recycled waste of Western Europe and North America is still more than the waste produced by people in 7 other regions.

Recycling is currently seen as desirable. However, not creating waste by using less packaging and more reusing, would reduce the need to recycle.

“One of the great challenges of our time is to collectively agree on what is waste and what are second-hand products - this question extends to end-of-life ships as much as to electronic goods ...”

Achim Steiner, 2006

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