EUROPE'S PAPER HOARDING HABITS

Holding on to physical documents is causing 'clutter contradiction', according to new research by ScanSnap.

People are struggling to manage their relationship with paper. They understand the benefits of digitisation, but psychological factors mean they are keeping hold of physical documents.

This 'clutter contradiction' is having a knock-on effect on productivity as well as causing stress.

Paper Pileup

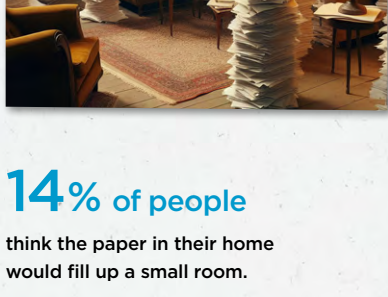The paper pileup is a phenomenon seen across regions and generations.

5,681 sheets
The amount of paper kept by the average household.

Over 160 billion sheets
across the UK, if stacked, could reach the height of the Shard 45,000 times.

14% of people
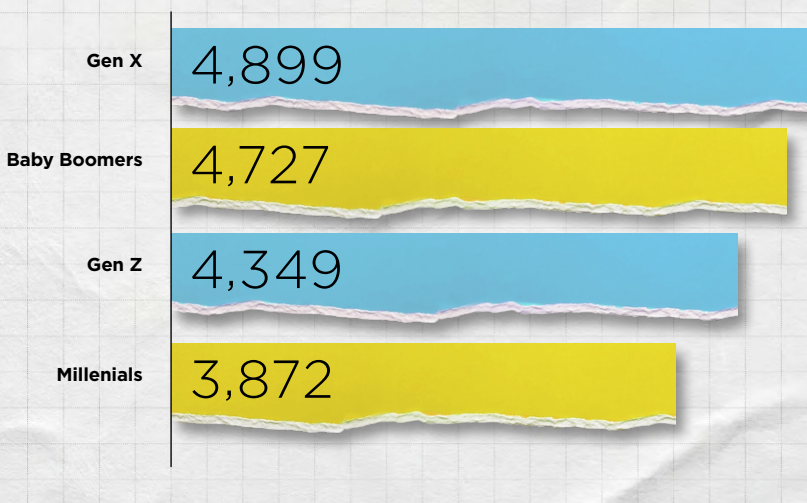think the paper in their home would fill up a small room.

THE UK ARE THE BIGGEST PAPER HOARDERS...

A4 SHEETS PER HOUSEHOLD

Country	Sheets
🇬🇧	5,681
🇮🇹	4,971
🇩🇪	4,501
🇪🇸	4,445
🇫🇷	4,182

AND GEN X ARE MOST LIKELY TO KEEP THE MOST PAPER...

A4 SHEETS PER GENERATION

Generation	Sheets
Gen X	4,899
Baby Boomers	4,727
Gen Z	4,349
Millennials	3,872

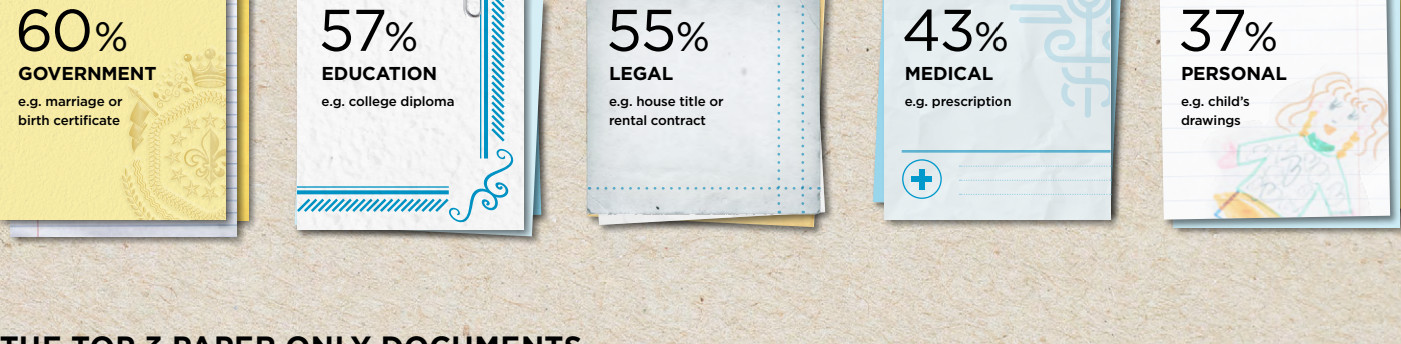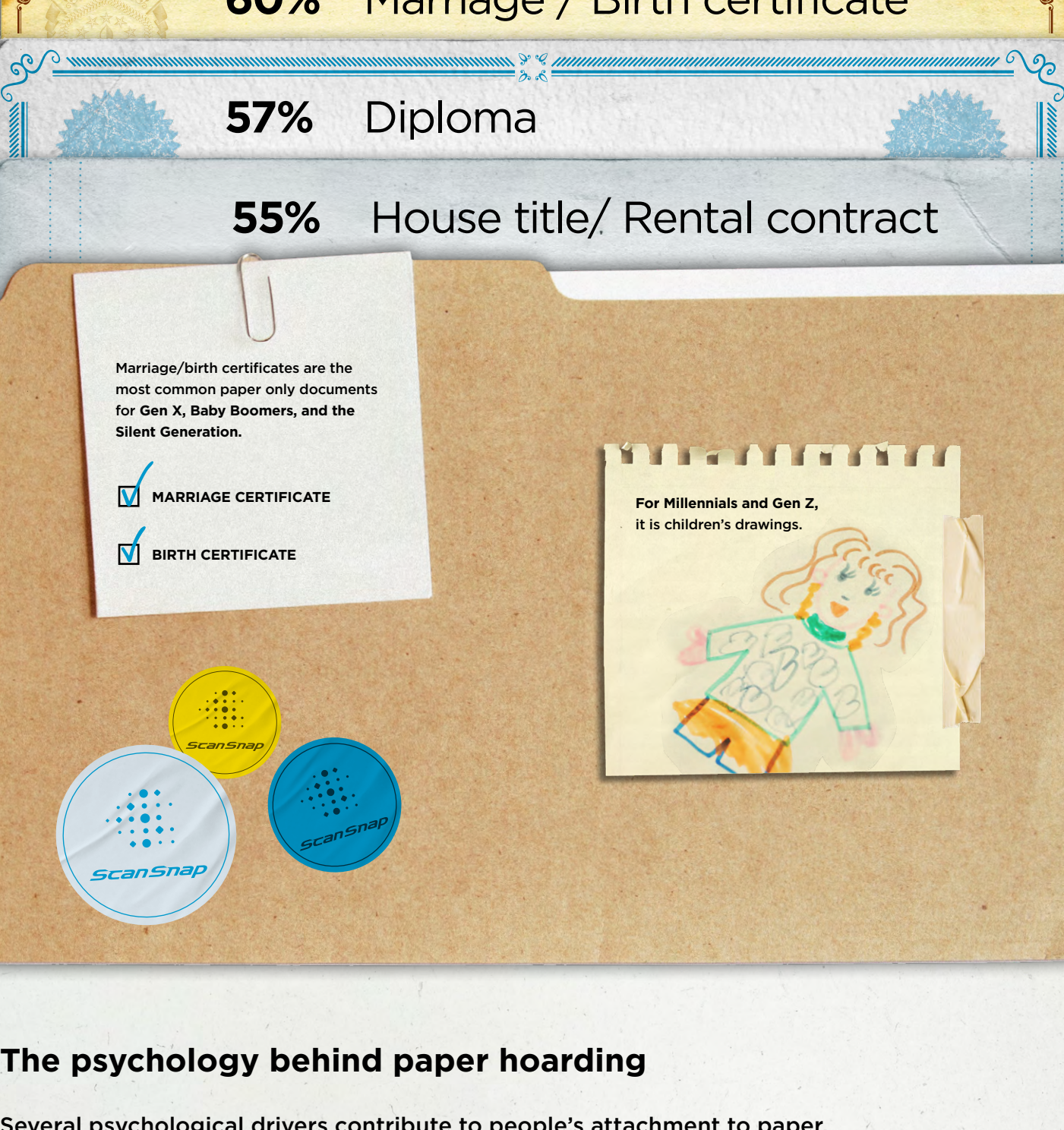## What are people holding onto?

The type of documents being kept shows some common trends. In general, people are more likely to keep "important" documents as paper-only versions. While some generations are more sentimental than others.
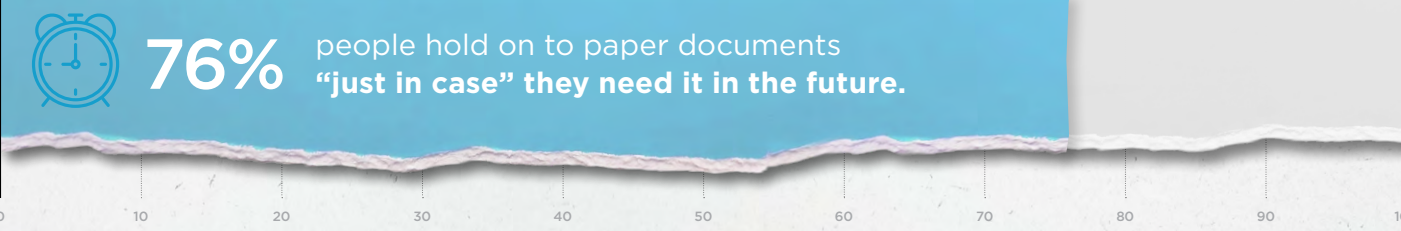
DOCUMENT TYPES KEPT IN PAPER ONLY FORM

60% GOVERNMENT
e.g. marriage or birth certificate

57% EDUCATION
e.g. college diploma

55% LEGAL
e.g. house title or rental contract

43% MEDICAL
e.g. prescription

37% PERSONAL
e.g. child's drawings

THE TOP 3 PAPER ONLY DOCUMENTS

60% Marriage / Birth certificate

57% Diploma

55% House title/ Rental contract

Marriage/birth certificates are the most common paper only documents for Gen X, Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation.

- ✓ MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE
- ✓ BIRTH CERTIFICATE

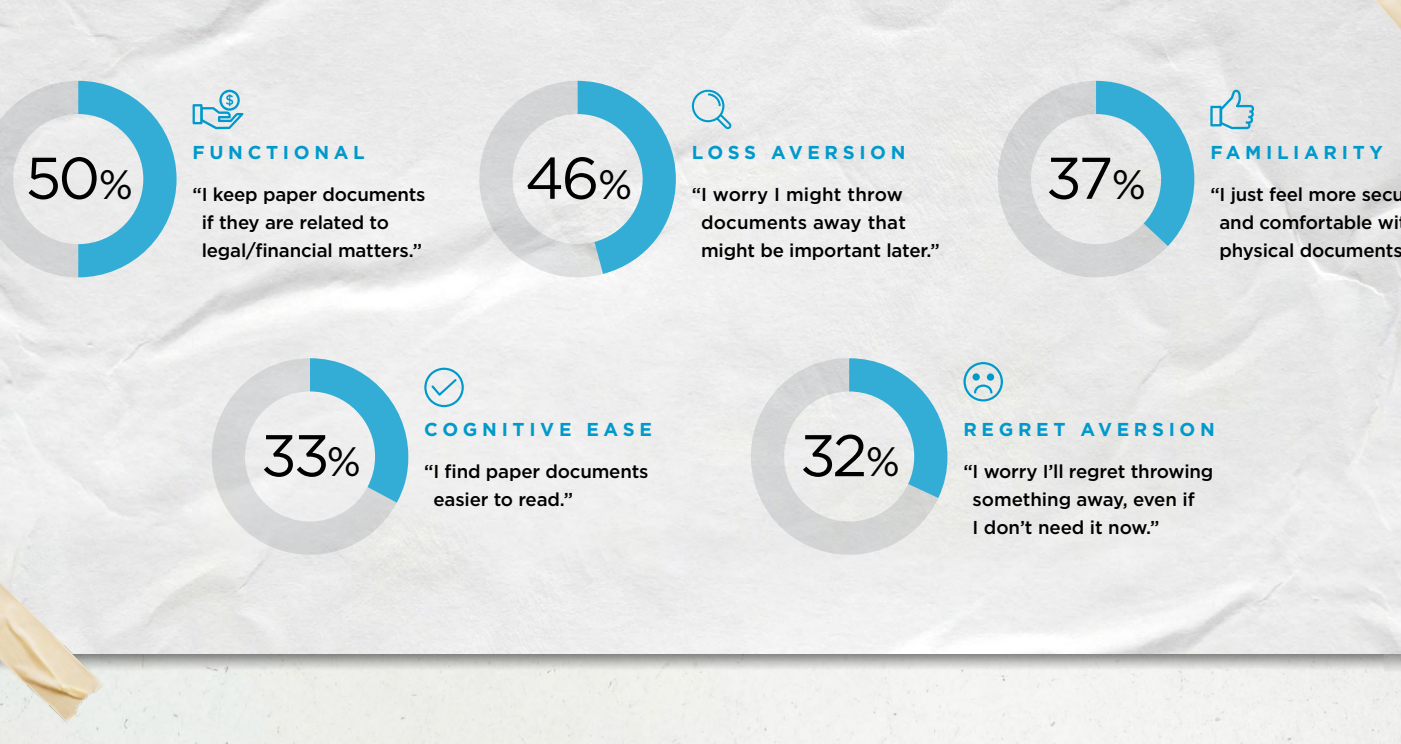For Millennials and Gen Z, it is children's drawings.

The psychology behind paper hoarding

Several psychological drivers contribute to people's attachment to paper, and their unwillingness to throw it away.

76% people hold on to paper documents "just in case" they need it in the future.

DOCUMENT TYPES KEPT IN PAPER ONLY FORM

50% FUNCTIONAL
"I keep paper documents if they are related to legal/financial matters."

46% LOSS AVERSION
"I worry I might throw documents away that might be important later."

37% FAMILIARITY
"I just feel more secure and comfortable with physical documents."

33% COGNITIVE EASE
"I find paper documents easier to read."

32% REGRET AVERSION
"I worry I'd regret throwing something away, even if I don't need it now."

The psychological impact of paper hoarding

Keeping paper is taking its toll – increasing clutter at home and work, and increasing stress as a result. A negative impact on daily life and reduced productivity are some of the knock-on effects.

68% people find it stressful if their home/work space is cluttered.

66% of people would like to have less clutter in work/home space.

Worry
The emotion that most defines our response to losing paper documents (63%).
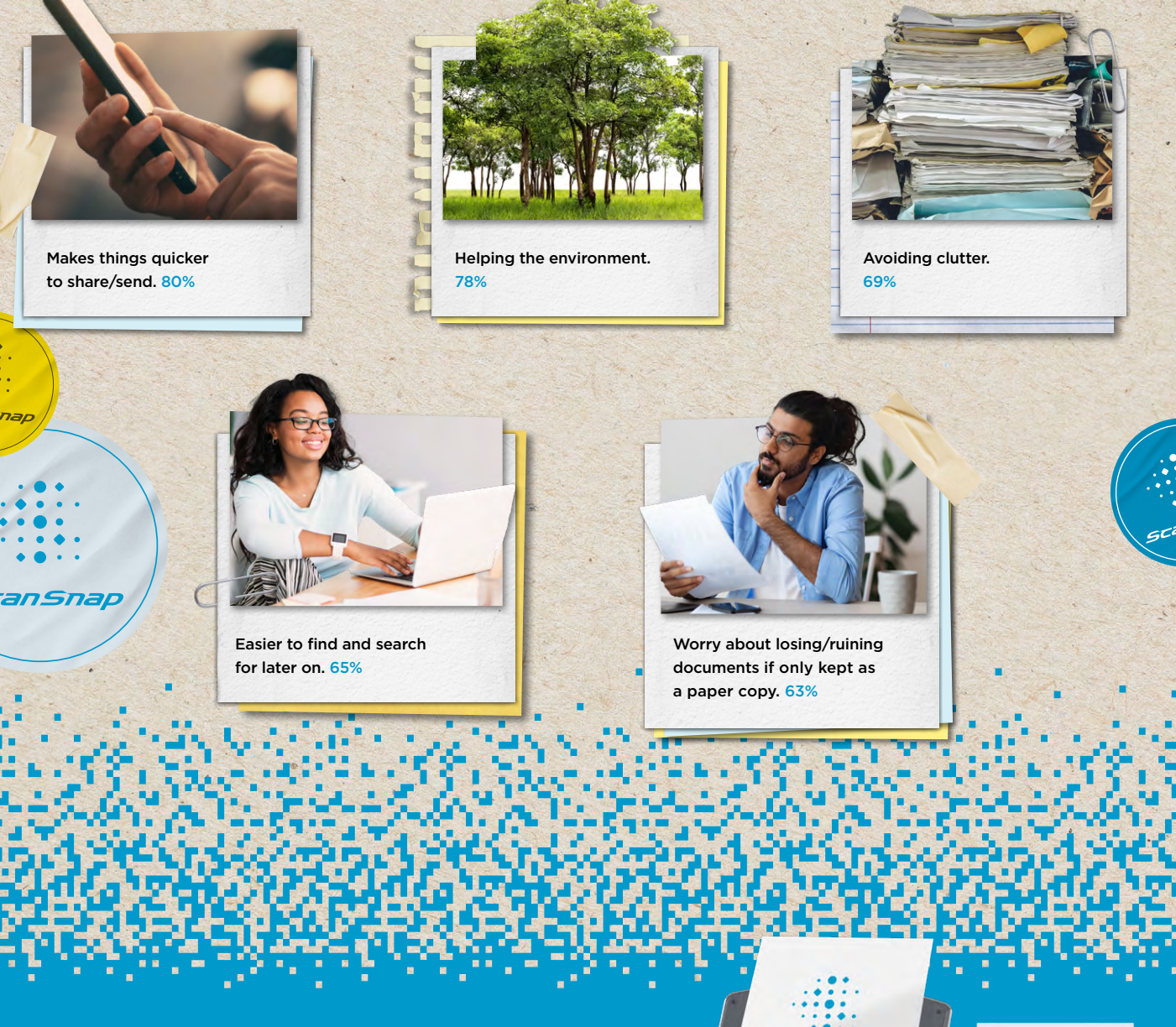
Attitudes to digitisation

Digitising documents is seen as a solution to this "clutter contradiction" that can boost productivity, improve well-being, and save space.

79% of people are open to start digitising.

TOP 5 DRIVERS FOR PEOPLE TO CREATE DIGITAL COPIES OF IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

- Makes things quicker to share/send. 80%
- Helping the environment. 78%
- Avoiding clutter. 69%
- Easier to find and search for later on. 65%
- Worry about losing/ruining documents if only kept on a paper copy. 63%

CURING THE CLUTTER CONUNDRUM WITH SCANSNAP

The ScanSnap range of scanners includes features that make moving to digital documents simple with smart scanning.

PEACE OF MIND
Scanning documents to digital storage systems protects you against unexpected threats, giving you one less thing to worry about.

DOCUMENT CATEGORISATION
Each scanned document is categorised and organised for easy access when you need it.

SEARCHABLE
Looking for specific information in a document? Searchable in-document text means you can find it quickly.

SINGLE BUTTON SHARING
Share documents with friends, family, and colleagues via email and socials with one press of a button.