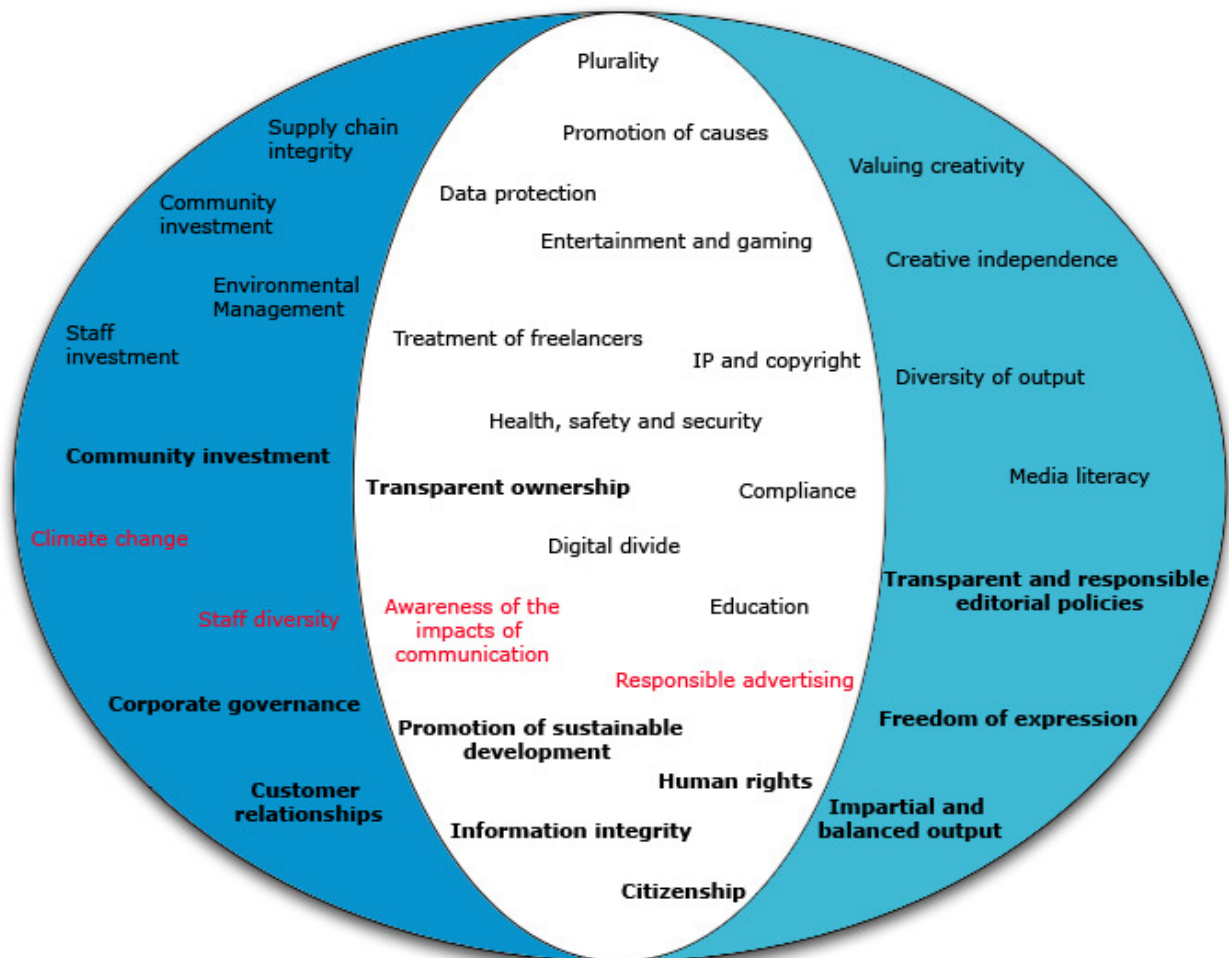


# Mapping the Landscape

## CSR issues for the media sector 2008



- CSR issues common to all sectors
- Common CSR issues with distinct implications for media
- Unique CSR issues for media

**Bold text** Issues thought important in the 2008 online survey

**Red text** New issues identified in 2008



## The Media CSR Forum

The Media Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Forum is a membership organisation of media companies aiming to discuss, develop and promote CSR issues for the UK media sector.

The Forum was established in 2001 to explore CSR and sustainability issues unique to media companies, and opportunities for collaborative engagement. The Forum's work includes:

- understanding the implications of CSR for media organisations
- identifying areas for prioritisation
- sharing best practice
- engaging with stakeholders
- collaborative projects on key issues

In 2003 the Forum commissioned a stakeholder engagement exercise in order to identify and validate the group's focus areas.

In 2008 we repeated this exercise, and our findings are presented in this report.

[www.mediacsforum.org](http://www.mediacsforum.org)

**The survey was conducted by** Acona, an independent corporate responsibility consultancy headquartered in London, part of Acona CMG Group. With its broad expertise, the company advises large, mainly corporate clients on a full range of social, environmental and ethical matters. Acona has provided secretariat and facilitation services to the Media CSR Forum since 2005.

We would like to thank the following forum members for funding the development of this report:

Aegis Group, BBC, Channel 4, Guardian Media Group, Informa, IPC Media, ITV, News International, Nickelodeon, Reed Elsevier, Sky, Trinity Mirror, Turner Broadcasting, United Business Media, Virgin Media, WPP and Yell.

Nicolas Ceasar, Partner  
Simon Hodgson, Managing Director

**acona**

[www.acona.com/cr](http://www.acona.com/cr)

## Foreword

### ***The freedom of the press is granted only to those who own one***

A. J. Liebling of the New Yorker

A lot has happened to the media landscape since the Media CSR Forum last commissioned a stakeholder survey in 2003. To begin with, this time we were able to build, distribute, collect and analyse stakeholder opinion using a simple online survey tool.

Over the last five years there has been a proliferation of blogs, podcasts, internet TV, social networking sites and 24 hour news and entertainment in the UK. The development of media-related technologies has handed the power to publish content to anyone possessing a computer or mobile phone.

Given these new tools, has content production become more democratic?

If yes, then we would expect some of the issues considered material for the sector in 2003 to have become less important – for example, the need for impartiality and balance, or freedom of expression. The survey, however, indicates that these issues have not disappeared. On the contrary, they are now buoyed up with new suggestions that the concentration of press ownership, once the privilege of Main Street and Fleet Street, has simply migrated to cyberspace. But how critical are consumers grazing across the new media spectrum? Do they sufficiently consider the provenance, intention, or integrity of what they consume? And across the digital divide stand those still heavily reliant on a relatively limited selection of traditional media sources. Both

groups pose interesting corporate responsibility challenges for the sector.

And whilst the media in general confronts demands to be more transparent, accountable and impartial in the face of an often fragmenting customer base and, in many cases, the need to turn a profit, our 2008 survey has identified an almost equally strong demand for the media to play its part in the promotion of sustainable development and the mitigation of climate change.

In 2006 and 2007 the Institute for Public Policy Research looked at the language used by the media when covering climate change (*Warm Words* and *Warm Words II*)<sup>i</sup>. Their research shows media can expand the debate and drive behavioral change and attitudes, helping government gain buy-in for associated policy changes. As noted by one of our survey respondents, media has a “responsibility to foster a more ecologically and socially sustainable society”.

## Approach

The 2008 survey followed on from the 2003 stakeholder work which subdivided CSR issues into three areas:

- those common to all sectors
- those shared with other sectors but with unique implications for the media
- those unique to the media sector

The only significant methodological change was that among common issues, climate change was granted a category of its own. Previously, it fell under the broader rubric of environmental responsibilities.

The survey aimed to uncover which issues had emerged, receded, and could be deemed most important.

We engaged opinion formers from both the CSR and media fields. Respondents completed an online questionnaire and were able to provide detailed comments via email, blog post or mail. We also held a validation workshop and one-on-one meetings for interested respondents.

## Limitations and future recommendations

While there were just over 100 respondents, they did not answer every question. Thus the sample size allows for examination of larger trends, while questions relating to sub-sector importance were fragmented and can thus be considered merely indicative. However, narrative feedback throughout was good.

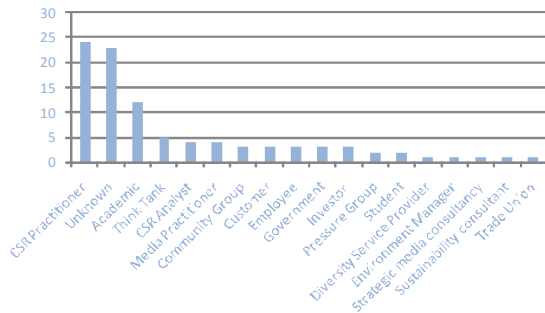
Our awareness of questionnaire fatigue meant we did not offer separate questionnaires for different sub-sectors, nor did we distinguish between news/factual information providers and entertainment/creative industries. It might be useful to do so in the future.

While respondents may have had one type of sector member in mind while completing the questionnaire, their responses and the issues they highlighted tend to apply across the sector.

Employees from sector members might have been canvassed but due to resource constraints, they were not. Validation exercises and subsequent sector feedback regarding findings suggests their inclusion might have changed the overall ranking of issues and identified others not selected by the wider stakeholder community. Our validation workshop and other feedback suggest that the treatment of freelancers, health and safety, staff investment, intellectual property (IP) and copyright, and community investment should all have scored higher.

## Respondent Breakdown

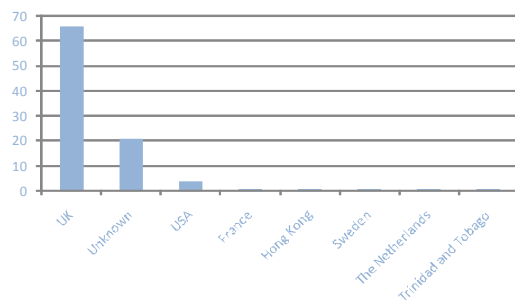
### Q. Please select your most appropriate stakeholder group? (96 respondents)



Survey respondents, primarily from the UK, were familiar with CSR/ethics as it relates to the media sector. In contrast, 60% of those attending validation sessions were US nationals, although all had significant UK media and CSR expertise, ranging from journalism, advertising and marketing, to CSR management.

The lack of media practitioners and media sector workers responding to the survey means results reflect an external rather than an internal stakeholder view of CSR media issues.

### Q. Contact information – Country information (96 respondents)



## Unique sector issues

The following issues were previously considered unique to the media sector.

**Creative independence.** Media companies should encourage artistic, production and journalistic independence whilst upholding relevant values and standards, without undue influence from media owners (e.g., prioritising commercial priorities over creativity because of loss or gain of advertising revenue).

**Diversity of output.** The output of media organisations should reflect, and benefit, the multicultural and diverse society in which we live (encompassing gender, ethnicity, disability, age, beliefs, social-economic background, etc).

**Freedom of expression.** Freedom of expression permits the unrestricted and uncensored inclusion of views and opinions in media output. Media should enable debate and dialogue free from harassment.

**Impartial and balanced output.** Media output should be fair, neutral, diverse and unbiased and reflect and inform public opinion and dialogue, supported by editorial policies independent from ownership.

**Media literacy.** The ability to access, critically understand and create media in its varying forms.

**Transparent and responsible editorial policies.** Editorial policies, standards or codes to which media organisations conform should include accuracy, impartiality and influence.

**Valuing creativity.** Media should invest in and nurture a wide range of talent at living wages. They should encourage staff innovation and entrepreneurship.

Two new issues emerged from the 2008 survey, namely:

- **Responsible advertising**
- **Awareness of the impact of communication**

For survey respondents, the most important issues in this section related to content integrity. In order of importance these were:

1. Transparent and responsible editorial policies
2. Impartial and balanced output
3. Freedom of expression

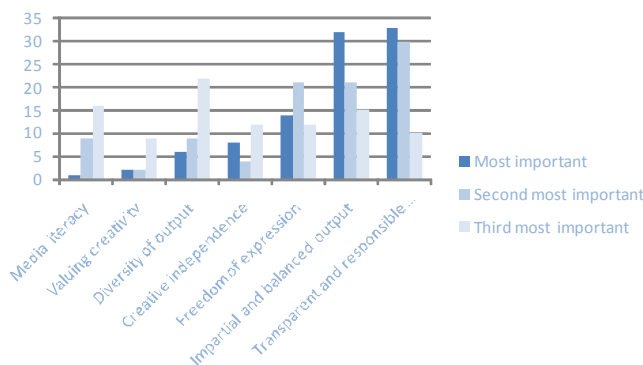
While these issues relate primarily to the treatment of fact rather than the creation of entertainment/advertising, there is a trend toward merging traditional entertainment formats with factual programming to create a news/entertainment hybrid – “infotainment.”<sup>ii</sup>

Participants in the validation workshop highlighted the need to reverse the trend and separate the presentation of news from entertainment. They also warned of the trend in the merger of the genres and the blurring of the traditional format distinctions.

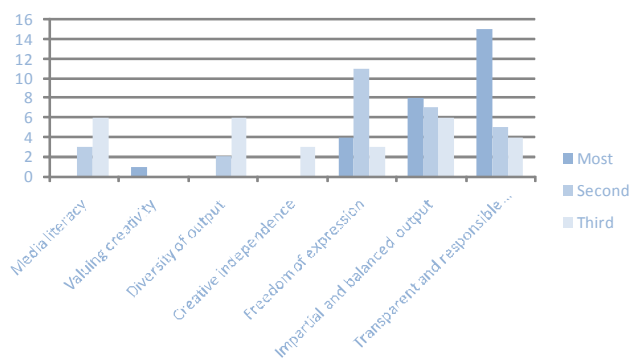
Workshop participants also recognised that media organisations are under pressure to produce factual content quickly and to extend its usage. Whereas in print and often online opinion-led pieces are usually clearly labelled, awareness may be lacking in television broadcasting. As one media practitioner at the workshop explained:

*It is our responsibility to respond to what is going on in the world in a fair and accurate way. Over time it will be those that are more transparent about how they do this, and those that have the most trusted information that will win out.*

**Please rank the three issues you think most important here (96 respondents)**



**Please rank the three issues you think most important here (just CSR analysts and practitioners - 28 respondents)**



There was some coalescence around the “third issue” with media literacy and diversity of output becoming more prominent once the fundamental aspects had been highlighted. This is despite the fact that media literacy is a term rarely used outside media and academic circles.

**Media Literacy**

Media literacy, as Ofcom defines it, has three distinct strands (see definition on p. 7). Tessa Jowell, during her tenure as Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, deemed media literacy to be as important to societal inclusion as reading, writing and arithmetic:

*With so many ways to get information – not just through TV and radio but also internet and mobile phone – it becomes increasingly hard to know where what we see or hear is coming from, who has made it and why. We need to make sure that people are equipped to understand and interpret this mass of communication, and differentiate between opinion and fact, so they can challenge what they see and hear.<sup>iii</sup>*

As media platforms proliferate, it is necessary to ensure the public at large keeps pace. They should be able to access and evaluate information to best effect. Equally, vulnerable groups such as children require protection from inappropriate information, now available from a wider variety of sources than ever before. Respondents indicated that responsibility for media literacy lies partly with the consumer (and parents in the case of children) and partly with media owners. As one workshop attendee stated:

*The media love to work in and with that small group of the population that are early adopters.... Masses of people are getting left behind ... but dealing with this topic in such a fast moving environment just isn't sexy.*

Quote from the validation workshop



## Diversity of output

Diversity of output was also highlighted, and it seems that media companies still need to invest more effort in coming to terms with this issue. Multinational media owners must understand how to serve new markets like Brazil, Russia, India and China. According to respondents, they should avoid superficial representations of minority views (see Samir Shah in his presentation to the Royal Television Society in 2008)<sup>iv</sup>.

*In my view, cultural institutions, the media in particular, can play a major role in providing a society with that awareness of its own diversity, in a way that is not divisive and fragmenting.*

Trevor Phillips, Superdiversity, Television's Newest Reality, 2008<sup>v</sup>

As highlighted in the validation workshop, content diversity is aided by diverse workforces (at all levels of a media organisation). Otherwise, a critical gap emerges between content producers and the varied markets they aim to serve.

## Awareness of the impact of communication

The survey's unique issues section identified the need to understand the impact of communication. This was brought to Forum members' attention by WWF in 2005<sup>vi</sup> through the introduction of the term "brain print" or the residual influence of output on audiences. The extent of this influence is difficult to measure. However, as one stakeholder with significant advertising industry experience noted:

*There is an incredible amount of money put into research by the advertising industry into proving through qualitative and quantitative research that this and that type of communication will impact behaviour and purchasing behaviour. If that's the case, then how is half an hour, when you have a consumer's full attention, not going to influence their view on things like violence in society, or consumer behaviour or whatever it is?*

Quote from the validation workshop

## Responsible advertising

The notion of responsible advertising links to a media owner's willingness to carry advertising that conflicts with its standards. The issue is not new for advertising agencies familiar with industry specific codes and laws, for example, on alcohol or gambling and gaming products. This becomes problematic when the notion of what is safe, such as products and services that may or may not be beneficial to the environment, becomes subjective.

Whilst the advertising industry has been accused of greenwash, and using weak environmental claims to sell products (the Advertising Standards Authority upheld 42 complaints regarding environmental claims in 2007 compared with 24 in 2004),<sup>vii</sup> this does reflect the industries attempt to react to the broader societal demand for greener products.

*...the awareness within the advertising sector over the last year has been incredible. It's good to see.*

Survey Respondent

## What sub-sectors are these issues most important to?

Impartial and balanced output was thought most relevant to TV, radio and publishing but was also found to be applicable to 'all media' as well.

Transparent editorial was considered relevant to all media and specifically TV, radio, online and information providers (e.g. news agencies and financial information providers).

Freedom of expression was thought relevant to TV and information providers.

## What if we don't address some of these issues?

Survey respondents were asked to assess (highly negatively, negatively or neutral) how inaction would impact their most important issues – audience relationships; client relationships; employee satisfaction; financial performance; public perception; and trust and integrity.

An assessment of highly negative trends shows inaction on transparent and editorial policies, valuing creativity and diversity of output would be most damaging to the sector. However, as stated in the limitations section, the number of responses was not statistically significant.

## Selected Stakeholder Comments

*Without impartiality then information in the media becomes little more than propaganda which will be ignored by individuals leading to a further decrease in the tendency for individuals to engage in shaping the future through using their democratic rights to vote for change!*

Survey Respondent

*The long term social impact of the media is not being recognised. In other words, the pursuit of individuals, vilifying of women etc is done on a case by case basis and the net impact of this on our individual sense of worth and our social capital is ignored.*

Jayanti Durai, Munro & Forster

*The challenges tend to be longer term – with declining audience numbers and the gravitation of audiences to alternative channels that are perceived to be more trustworthy.*

Survey Respondent

*As global power shifts, the value of truthful, impartial reporting to people's well-being will increase (e.g. as enabler for democracy). But media also has a role to entertain, and the financial value of the entertainment market will increase as wealth and leisure increase. Both the news and entertainment businesses must be allowed to flourish, but it will become increasingly difficult to manage the two together without conflict.*

Simon Berkeley, Kinsale Partnership

*It seems that the profit imperative is growing – and marginalising all other normative, professional, and societal concerns – and thus reducing creative independence.*

Peter Dahlgren, Lund University

*In terms of freedom of expression, it's widely acknowledged that a number of prominent internet-related companies publicly espouse a set of principles that allow them to satisfy a broad range of stakeholder expectations and demands. Yet, some of these obligations appear to be, at best, rather hollow and at worse, flagrant contradictions of their corporate philosophies. The case of Google acting in complicity with the Chinese Government and censoring information deemed inappropriate or illegal is a well-documented example that highlights the normative challenges they face with freedom of expression. It can be supposed that the new media players also share their old predecessors' challenges in so far as financial interests may well trump the public interest as companies seek to strengthen their bottom lines.*

Scott Walker, Media CSR Practitioner

## Issues with specific implications for the media sector

The following issues were considered to have specific implications for the sector:

**Citizenship.** Media companies should promote individual and group participation and involvement in society.

**Compliance.** Media companies should adhere to all laws and regulations where they operate.

**Data protection.** Media companies should ensure customers' confidential and personal information is held/utilised in a secure and legally compliant manner.

**Digital divide.** Media companies should promote broad access and use of media through new and emerging platforms.

**Education.** Media companies should foster learning and skills.

**Entertainment and gaming.** Certain media companies have offerings which require a payment in exchange for the chance of a greater return.

**Health, safety and security.** Media companies should provide a secure, safe and healthy environment for their employees which meets legislative and regulatory requirements where they operate.

**Human rights.** Some media companies operate in countries with poor human rights records.

**Information integrity.** Media companies should ensure information does not mislead, is accurate, protects the vulnerable, and does not incite intolerance and/or conflict.

**IP and copyright.** Media companies face issues such as piracy, copyright, royalty payments, counterfeiting and downloading.

**Plurality.** Media companies should offer choice for various markets.

**Promotion of causes.** Media companies should raise awareness of major issues, encouraging learning and understanding.

**Promotion of sustainable development.** Media companies should encourage individuals/citizens to achieve sustainability goals and minimise negative impacts.

**Transparent ownership.** Media should clearly communicate its ownership structure, related brands and interests.

**Treatment of freelancers.** Media companies should be aware of the treatment (e.g. working conditions, pay etc) of self-employed, or sub-contracted persons working for their organisations.

Three issues ranked equally as most important in this section: information integrity, the promotion of sustainable development and citizenship. Education also registered as a significant second issue. Consensus around a third issue was less clear.

The dichotomy presented in the survey results between integrity of information and promotion of sustainability goals (whether environmental, social or other) was unravelled further in the validation workshop.

Whilst there is a clear need for news and news related imagery to maintain very high levels of integrity and impartiality, the active promotion of sustainable development issues, it was suggested, is best left to the creative side of the industry. This includes advertising and promotion.

Those media companies with niche products for specific sectors such as insurance, finance or even CSR itself, are benefiting from opportunities to align themselves with sustainability issues with no need for 'dumbing down.' It seems, however, that more mainstream media struggle to bring these issues to audiences meaningfully while giving them popular appeal. Some have succeeded and the BBC 2's Tribe was mentioned in this regard.

Reflecting the Real World 2<sup>viii</sup> by the International Broadcasting Trust makes several recommendations some of which may be relevant to organisations struggling to bring sustainability issues to wider audiences:

- improve and maintain relationships, trust and communication with specialists, including the scientific community and NGOs, to help inform

the public about emergent issues and provide factually-based articles/programmes

- think more strategically – this could include linking the creative side of an organisation with its CSR and sustainability objectives
- provide more opportunities for pollination of ideas and collaboration across genres and with outside experts. If risk-taking and experimentation is to be encouraged, media organisations need to devote more resources to the development process. Individuals who feel passionately – champions – also play a key role in promoting difficult or ambitious projects
- content should cater for a range of audiences, not just those who already have a strong interest
- special attention needs to be paid to new formats and to populist drama – both have the potential to reach big mainstream audiences

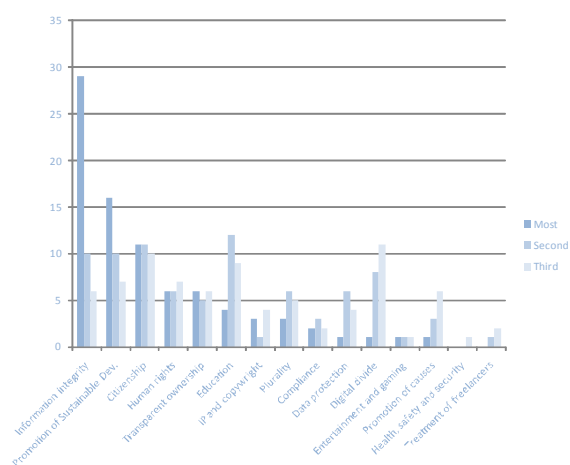
Whilst the next section looks at climate change specifically, media practitioners felt sustainable development commanded attention as an *issue du jour* and some felt media owners should not pander to its siren call. In the validation workshop, some media owners were even criticised for trying to lead on environmental issues when, in fact, their perceived critical issues like information integrity were being overlooked:

*Media companies can hide behind taking a lead on climate change because they are white collar companies and have low operational footprints.*

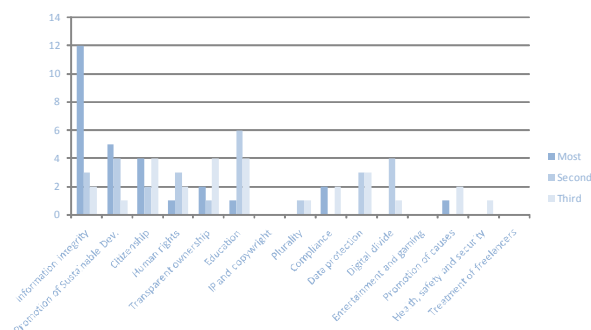
Quote from the validation workshop

Some of those responding to the survey – CSR analysts and sector practitioners – may have lost some objectivity, for when this group is isolated from other respondents it becomes clear the media and sustainable development is of concern.

**Please rank the three issues you think most important here (84 respondents)**



**Please rank the three issues you think most important here (just CSR analysts and practitioners - 28 respondents)**



**Citizenship**

*Properly regulated, the media should be capable of safeguarding the 'plurality of public voice', one of the prerequisites of a healthy democracy, ensuring that all of a nation's citizens are promptly, accurately and impartially informed.*

Lord Puttnam, Roscoe Lecture<sup>ix</sup>

Citizenship intertwines with many of the issues already identified, including integrity of information and transparency of ownership, and likewise may underscore why plurality did not rank more prominently. But there is a potential catch 22 because if the media does not promote the citizen's role in democracy and the political process, politics as presented in the media may gravitate to the lowest common denominator, becoming simplistic, or reactionary.<sup>x</sup>

**Education**

The media's role in providing engaging child and adult educational enrichment scored highly among respondents. It was seen as a duty but also an opportunity to help children and families access useful contact across new platforms. Despite scoring highly, respondents provided no additional commentary in the survey or at the validation workshop.

Beyond formal education, and particularly with reference to the developing world, media was seen as being able to advance social justice.

## Issues important to the internal stakeholder

As stated above, the survey did not capture issues associated with media workers (such as the treatment of freelancers, health and safety, data protection, and IP and copyright) but these were addressed in the validation workshop and in subsequent feedback.

### Health and Safety

Media companies are subject to the UK Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007<sup>xi</sup>, holding them to account for health and safety failures wherever they operate.

For those producing content, the safety and security of journalists is probably the most high profile health and safety issue.<sup>xii</sup> Ever pressurised media environments place great psychological and emotional strain on media workers resulting in stress, anxiety, and exhaustion. The incumbent responsibility of media owners for staffers and freelancers cannot be ignored<sup>xiii</sup>.

### Data Protection and IP and Copyright

In June 2007 F&C Investment presented to the Forum its report called Managing Access Security & Privacy in the Global Digital Economy<sup>xiv</sup>.

Although focused on the technology sector, due to rapid convergence, many issues were equally relevant for the media sector. These included:

- the risk of employees leaving laptops in public places is biggest key security risk and organisations need mechanisms to manage this
- human rights issues surrounding infringement of privacy rights through technology, particularly under the cloak of security considerations
- social expectations for protecting vulnerable customers from harmful or offensive content
- empowering customers to preserve privacy through embedded product features and tools such as spam filters
- the need for early resolution of copyright issues surrounding content distribution
- protecting IP in an open source programming environments at risk from competitors and hackers
- the need to produce “plain English” privacy policies

While not a key issue for the survey's wider stakeholder community, IP and copyright was frequently cited in the validation workshop. Participants acknowledged IP is complex and can mean different things to different stakeholders, as illustrated by this workshop attendee:

*IP is an underscored issue because it's complex. As laws become more absolute around this there is a lot of tension and concern about restricting copyright, what is fair use and what is not. BBC iPlayer and Hulu from MBC and Fox are good steps forward but restricting access to people is counter intuitive to a generation who expect content anytime anywhere.*

Quote from the validation workshop

## The Treatment of Freelancers

Much of the media industry relies heavily on freelance workers. While this did not score highly in the survey, John Toner, national organiser for the NUJ's freelance sector, who attended a Forum stakeholder workshop in December 2006, argued it should come higher up the agenda:

*In general, the industry's investment in freelancers has reduced and fees have come down substantially over the last 15 years. At the same time the work produced has been re-used and reaped extra value for content owners.*

*For example, in the future, a freelance journalist will write an article on a Monday, contribute to a podcast on a Tuesday, write a blog on a Wednesday and research a book on a Thursday.*

John Toner, December 2006

According to workshop participants, responsibilities in this area may include:

- ensuring freelancers adhere to the same ethical standards as permanent staff
- paying freelancers fairly and promptly
- transparency on organisations' use of material and copyright
- supporting freelancers' need for benefits and continued professional development

## What sub-sectors are these issues most important to?

With a wide range of issues in this section, the only identifiable trend is that information integrity, the promotion of sustainable development and the support of citizenship are the responsibility of all media players.

## What if we don't address some of these issues?

Survey respondents were asked to assess to what extent inaction on their most important issue would impact on: audience relationships; client relationships; employee satisfaction; financial performance; public perception; and trust and integrity.

Those respondents who answered this question felt inaction on plurality, information integrity, transparent ownership and the promotion of sustainable development would damage the sector most.



## Selected Stakeholder Comments

*The theme of citizenship relates to the fundamental health of democracy – not just as a system, but as a way of life, a kind of society. The declines in civil engagement, the role of the media – and power elites – in this regard are troubling.*

Peter Dahlgren, Lund University

*Sustainable development is the critical issue for all sectors over the coming years – media must play its role.*

Anonymous

*In an era of consolidation and increased cynicism with media conglomerates, transparency in ownership practices can do much to abate negative public perception.*

Philip Javellana, LSE

*Many of the concerns expressed in the list are best addressed (at least within a capitalist or proto-capitalist media marketplace) by industry plurality. There is relatively little accountability possible within monopoly or oligopoly. The market is not sufficient to address issues of diversity, for example, unless and until minority positions evolve into majority positions. Given that, the best protection is competition, which allows greater consumer choice and will stimulate innovation and creativity amongst outlets that have to differentiate themselves from each other.*

Tracy Rosenberg, Media Alliance

*The above list is too huge & diverse. More context or focus on economic vs. social/cultural values would help. For example, in a social context, I would have chosen human rights; in an economic context, I chose copyright.*

Sandra Bangasser, LSE

*Journalists have absolutely no time to research articles anymore. It's an internet search, copy, then paste. You don't have to pay anyone to get a press release printed; just put it on the net and it ends up on a media owner's website.*

Quote from the validation workshop

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## General Issues

This section asked about issues common to most sectors with no specific implications for the media sector. In addition to those issues identified in 2003, climate change was listed separately from environmental management due to its recent prominence.

The following issues were listed in the survey:

**Climate change.** Companies should be concerned with climatic changes as a consequence of man-made pollution.

**Community investment.** Companies should make direct investments in communities through donations (including money, equipment, content, etc.) or employee volunteering.

**Corporate governance.** Companies have responsibilities relating to their boards, shareholders and other stakeholders which impacts their strategy and performance.

**Customer relationships.** Companies should build and maintain good relationships with customers by providing a high quality service, responding effectively and quickly to complaints and suggestions for improvement.

**Environmental management.** Companies should operate in a way that minimises their environmental impact (e.g. responsible management of energy, water and waste).

**Staff investment.** Companies should provide a supportive and safe environment for staff to grow and develop through training, professional development and benefit plans, allowing them to achieve optimal work/life balance.

**Supply chain integrity.** Companies should ensure suppliers are treated fairly, are chosen and paid transparently and are held to account for meeting ethical standards.

Stakeholders added the following 'new' issue:

## Staff diversity

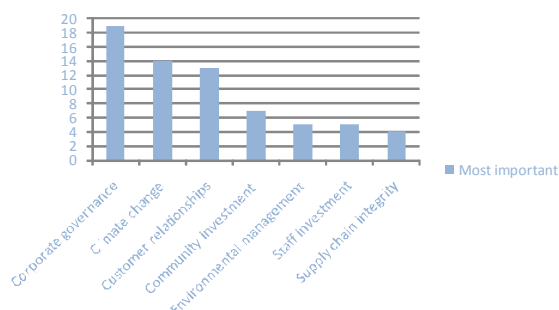
Corporate governance was the most popular issue for survey respondents in this section, in particular, senior executive behaviour in the interest of the company, shareholders and the wider community.

Interest in this area can be considered a link to high profile corporate scandals that resulted in the US Sarbanes Oxley Act, as well as the recent conviction of media giant Conrad Black at Hollinger International for financial impropriety.

Corporate governance is also key for a sector noted for being highly acquisitive and diverse by brand and location.

Goldman Sachs, which presented their 2006 report<sup>xv</sup> on Environmental Social and Governance issues in the European Media sector to the Forum, noted that UK media lead the way in the number of non-executive Board directors. Yet they cited "large blocks of family shareholding and cross-holdings ... common in the sector".

Please select the one issue you think is most relevant to the media sector? (68 respondents)

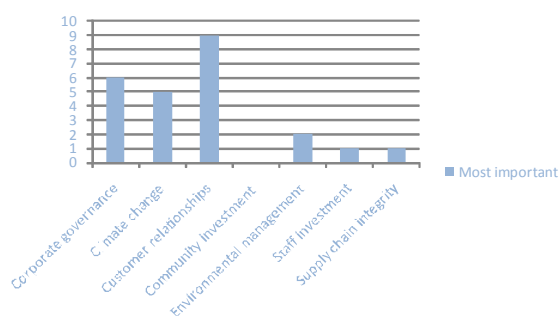


CSR practitioners and analysts chose customer relationships as the most important issue in this section, most likely correlating to damage in UK customer trust following high profile cases of fraudulent phone-in competitions by broadcasters.

### Issues important to the internal stakeholder

Low scoring areas given more clarity in our validation workshop and media sector feedback were: community investment, staff investment and staff diversity (highlighted as a new issue).

Please rank the three issues you think most important here (just CSR analysts and practitioners - 24 respondents)



### Community investment

Workshop attendees suggested community investment has numerous benefits including building media brand, developing team and individual competences and improving communities. They noted that small charities in particular often lack the tools necessary to generate beneficial media coverage. Focused community activity around mentoring, volunteering and fundraising can bring the media and communities closer together and the Media Trust<sup>xvii</sup> and Voluntary Action Media Unit<sup>xviii</sup> were cited as doing good work in this area.

The popularity of climate change both with CSR experts and other respondents may be partly due to its separation from environmental management as an issue in the survey. Respondents highlighted climate change as an issue for media companies more in terms of their coverage than their performance. The recent ruling by media regulator Ofcom over the heavily criticised Great Global Warming Swindle<sup>xvi</sup> raises questions about journalistic and commissioning practices as radical climate change views appear to receive greater weight than others.

### Staff investment

According to the Goldman Sachs media report<sup>xix</sup> of costs incurred by European media companies, over 30% are associated with human capital. The report indicated two-thirds of the aggregate asset base of the companies studied comprised intangibles such as IP (with advertising agencies having the highest proportion).

## Staff diversity

Diversity of output requires diversity of input and this is relevant to most sectors. Workshop participants pointed out the challenge of ensuring the people behind the scenes are reflective of their customers.

## What sub-sectors are these issues most important to?

Corporate governance, climate change and customer relationships were considered important to all media types.

## What if we don't address some of these issues?

Not doing anything about climate change scored most negatively for the sector and is most likely indicative of emotiveness of the subject. Customer relationships and corporate governance followed closely behind.

## Selected Stakeholder Comments

*Bringing media people closer to communities through mentoring etc helps to change the way the media depicts and tells stories about certain groups. The power of strategic community partnerships on the way societal groups and issues are depicted in the media is very powerful. It goes back to the diversity of input issue. Views from groups also come from leaders of groups not participants of groups. i.e. the team leader and not the team members. Community partnerships can prevent this.*

Quote from validation workshop

*The media sector seems to be lagging behind in its response to climate change and whilst I see the need for fair and balanced reporting, it is frightening to still see journalists take a*

*sceptical view of the issue. The media more than anyone has a responsibility to educate and inform on how the world can respond to this issue.*

Lucy Jenkins, HSBC Holdings plc

*I think it's really easy for climate change to lead us down a certain path to the exclusion of things like human rights and social justice and, in terms of sustainable development, this is really bad.*

Quote from the validation workshop

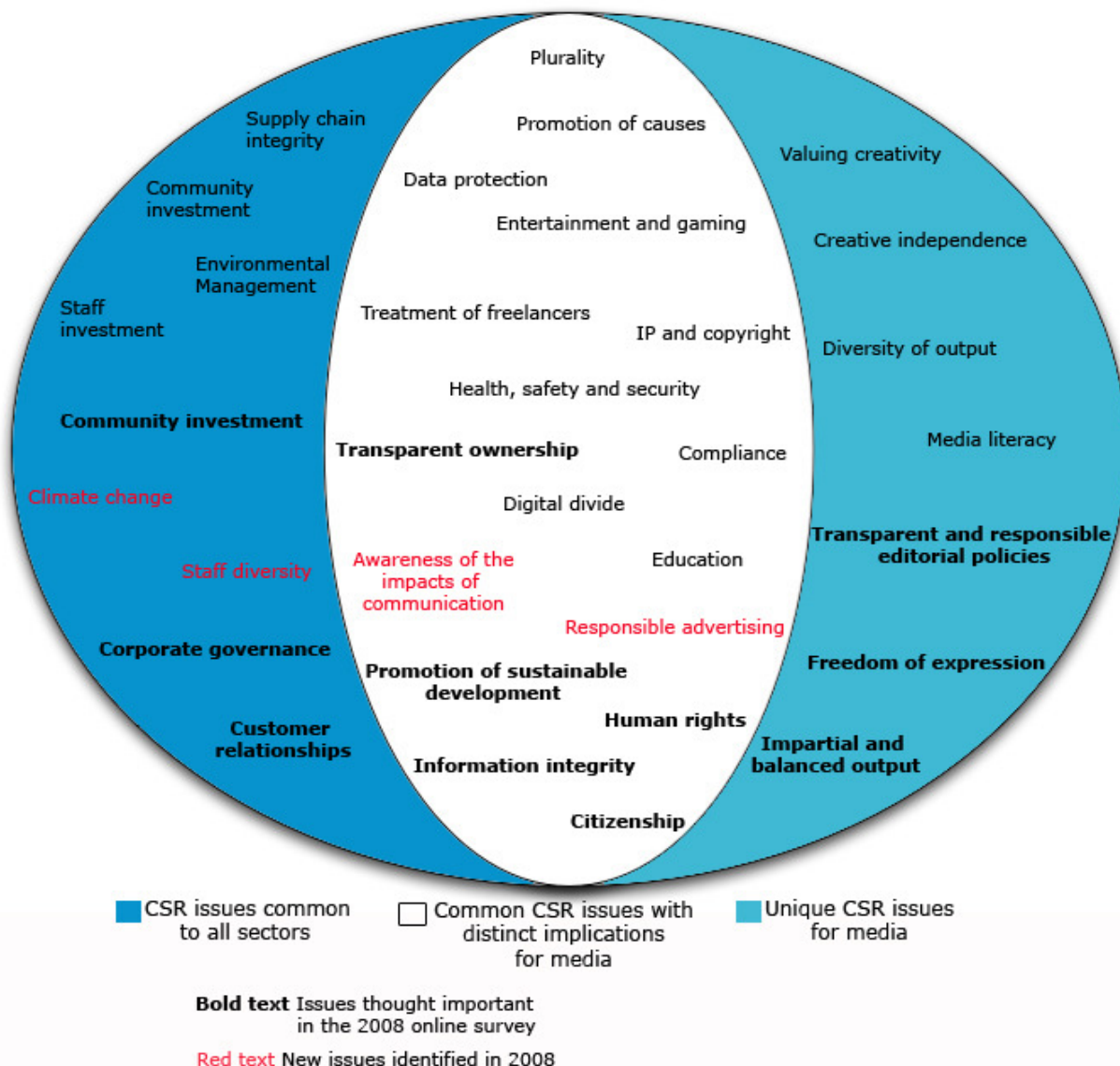
*When the science has consensus but the media bring up both parts of the argument as part of being impartial, you risk bringing out the kooks as well as the scientists. This is a really tricky issue for journalists in terms of using traditional journalistic approaches versus presenting fact and moving the issue on.*

Quote from the validation workshop

*Imagine a train hurtling down a track and heading off a cliff. The driver has gone a bit mad and demands a popular vote of all passengers on whether or not to apply the brakes. In the time remaining only one person has the power and reach to make that vote happen. That's the conductor with the tannoy. But the conductor says 'people don't want to hear bad news like that from me – it would make me very unpopular'. The train is our civilisation which is already probably beyond the tipping point of climate change but can maybe halt some of the worst effects if it acts radically and fast. The driver of the train is our heads-in-the-sand 'leaders'. The conductor, the man with the tannoy, that's the media sector. Who is madder or badder; the driver or the conductor?*

Jules Peck, Director, The Quality of Life Commission

## Conclusions and recommendations



The Media CSR Forum undertook this survey to understand and prioritise media sector responsibilities, updating the initial Forum survey undertaken in 2003. Forum members acknowledge it does not replace the need for individual organisations to engage with their own stakeholders at a more detailed level. Our diagram continues to divide the issues in the same way, with those unique to the sector to the right and the more general issues to the left and centre. The bold text indicates those issues thought particularly important by the survey and newly added issues are in red.

There is a clear difference between issues important to external stakeholders, which have received high profile media attention, and those issues important to internal stakeholders. Media companies may wish to keep this in mind when managing and prioritising issues and developing stakeholder communications.

It now appears there are far fewer issues unique to the media sector. Thus materiality, understood as the consideration of the significance of a particular issue by an organisation, gains in importance. This is particularly relevant as new media joins traditional media in the sector.

Transparency and integrity of information, as in the 2003 survey, remain key and feedback from the survey and validation workshop suggests focus in these areas can build stakeholder loyalty and trust.

Closer collaboration on corporate responsibility between the IT/telecoms and media sectors could help each address overlapping issues. The Forum may provide a useful space for achieving such collaboration.

The survey gives rise to interesting questions which the Forum might consider, such as how can media companies meaningfully contribute to a more sustainable future through impactful communications, that is, by doing what they do best. It highlights the need to link media company CSR specialists with their strategy, product development, corporate affairs, and board colleagues. This linkage might contribute to innovative product development and foster best in class products, services and processes.

The Media CSR Forum will strive to act on the key issues raised in the 2008 survey including media literacy, informal education, health and safety, staff diversity and the building of useful strategic relationships beyond the sector.

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## Appendix one – Written response

The following recommendations are taken from an extensive written submission to the survey by Scott Walker, a media CSR practitioner based in New York with significant UK media experience:

The forum importantly recognises that measurement and reporting are crucial areas where the media sector could improve its transparency. Obviously the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) presently offers no guidelines for the media sector but the media forum should continue its work to develop an index that may potentially enforce reputation mechanisms and provide competitive advantage to companies that are indeed fostering social and ecological values.

CSR values and such related duties should be elevated and included within the mission statement of a media company or conglomerate. Media companies that have not already done so should establish Board-level Committees for dealing with CSR issues and integrate performance-related CSR practices.

In terms of specific issues that are relevant to the broad sector, forum members need to give proper regard to intellectual property rights holders. In this respect, media companies should work with Ofcom to develop and improve appropriate Codes of Practice that apply to the rights negotiations between broadcasters and freelance workers. Furthermore, the forthcoming media literacy efforts are very welcome and long overdue. However, there could be greater consideration to the CSR issues that relate to digital media in particular.

Efforts to find shared value in operating practices and in the social dimensions of competitive context have the potential not only to foster economic and social development but also to change the way companies and society think about each other. The UK media CSR forum is testament to that. In the spirit of continuing such collaborative efforts, the forum members should give greater consideration to establishing a media CSR forum in the U.S. to assess and cooperate on best practice activities, especially given CSR practices are generally less developed and arguably more necessary.