

## The Media CSR Forum Activity Report 2011

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### Objectives and purpose

The "Media Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Forum" (the "Forum") is a group of media organisations developing CSR and sustainability practices for the media sector. The meetings take place in London, but our activities are increasingly international in scope.

The Forum was established in 2001 in recognition that the practice of CSR and sustainability for media companies has many unique features that sets it apart from other business sectors. Members benefit from a collaborative approach. Our work includes:

- developing an understanding of the implications of CSR for media organisations
- identifying areas for focus
- sharing best practices
- engaging with stakeholders
- running collaborative projects on key issues

The Forum produces an Annual Report on its activities; this is the Report for 2011.

### Membership

At the end of 2011, the members of the Forum were:

Aegis Media, The BBC, BSkyB, Channel 4, Guardian Media Group, Informa, IPC Media, ITV, Modern Times Group, News International, Pearson, Random House, Reed Elsevier, TF1 Group, Trinity Mirror, Turner Broadcasting, United Business Media, Virgin Media and Yell Group.

### Secretariat

Acona Partners LLP continued to provide secretariat services to the Forum, and chaired Forum meetings throughout 2011. The Secretariat is the first point of contact for stakeholders and new member enquiries. Please telephone +44(0)20 7839 0182 or send an email to: [mediacsrforum@acona.com](mailto:mediacsrforum@acona.com).

## Activity summary

### Engaging with stakeholders

Our meetings are themed around a topical issue and always include a presentation from one or several stakeholders leading to a round-table discussion under Chatham House rules. During 2011, we explored the following themes:

#### Q1 – Learning from other industries

- **Nick Ceasar, Ashridge Business School**, presented recent research and talked about the 'long tail of CR', i.e. the suggestion that the real potential of CR emerges when 'ownership' is spread widely internally and externally
- **Ramon Arratia, InterfaceFLOR**, talked about how to foster internal engagement in sustainability programmes, using examples from his own company

#### Q2 – CR reporting and materiality

- **Dr Rory Sullivan, Responsible Investment expert**, shared his views on how investors use and value CR information based on his book, Valuing Corporate Responsibility: How Do Investors Really Use Corporate Responsibility Information?
- **Paul Burke, Acona Partners LLP**, gave a presentation on the future of sustainability reporting based on the report, Multiple Messages: The future of SD Reporting

#### Q3 – CR and risk

- **Martin Carter, Head of Engineering Governance, E.ON UK**, presented E.ON's innovative approach to identifying and managing risks to the business

#### Q4 – Climate change

- **Prof Mike Hulme, School of Environmental Sciences, East Anglia University**, talked about the role of 'framing' in public debates about climate change using insights from his book, Why We Disagree on Climate Change

### Health and Media debate

In addition to our regular quarterly meetings, we hosted a free half-day conference on the topic of media and health, entitled 'Are Journalists Bad for Your Health?' The event took place at the Royal College of Physicians on March 28<sup>th</sup> and was structured around three discussions, each with a 'proponent' and a 'sceptic' on the panel:

- The Jade Goody effect: Are journalists scaring people into the arms of their GP?
- Binge drink nation: How much is too much?
- Media hype: You said we'd all be dead by now?

The following panelists took part in the debate: Mark Sammon (Head of Factual Entertainment at Sky), Dr Ian Twinn (Director of Public Affairs at ISBA and Former MP), Jacqui Thornton (ex-Health Editor of the Sun and Lecturer in Journalism), Margaret McCartney (GP and Writer), Prof Mark Bellis (Director of the Centre for Public Health, Liverpool John Moores University), Branwen Jeffreys (BBC Health Correspondent) and Dr Sile Lane (Public Liaison and Campaigns Manager at Sense About Science).

The event attracted some 60 people, comprising media CR professionals, editorial staff/journalists, journalism staff, health practitioners, academics and the public. The 'minutes' of the day were written up as a set of [infographics](#) and distributed widely following the event.

## Other activities

**Governance and strategy.** The Secretariat conducted an internal 'how's it going?' exercise to establish how well the Forum is working for members and whether we need to refresh the strategy. The exercise was conducted as individual conversations with all members and threw up many actionable findings relating to the running of the Forum and future content/discussions. One resulting change has been to replace the Steering Group, which used to set the strategy at quarterly meetings, with regular one-to-one conversations with all members. The suggestions generated in these conversations will then be presented and approved by everyone at the regular meetings.

**GRI engagement.** The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), a framework for social, environmental and financial reporting, began working on a Media Sector Supplement in 2010. Three members of the Forum form part of the GRI multi-stakeholder working group. The Secretariat has provided commentary against and 'interpretation' of the draft framework throughout the process. The Supplement is scheduled for release in Q2 2012.

**Nordic CSR Forum.** Over the years, we have experienced an increasing interest in the Forum activities from abroad. As a result of this interest, two meetings were held with Scandinavian media companies in 2011, leading to the establishment of a Nordic sister forum. Six companies have joined as founding members and the first meeting will take place in April 2012 in Helsinki.

**Outreach.** The Secretariat continues to speak on behalf of the Forum when invited to do so. In 2011, the work of the Forum was presented at CSR events/conferences in the UK, Denmark and Sweden.

**Brainprint working group.** As the media CR agenda continues to mature, several media companies have become interested in understanding whether, and how, media content can inspire and provoke change amongst audiences, ultimately leading to behavioural change. A self-selected working group is looking into what the 'brainprint' looks like for different parts of the media spectrum and if it is possible to map and measure activity meaningfully in this area.

## **The Media CSR Forum website**

www.mediacsforum.org acts as the first point of entry for prospective members and inquiries about Forum activities. We continue to receive requests for information from a broad group of stakeholders, including academics and students, media analysts and other industry professionals.

In 2011, the website attracted some 3,200 visitors from 101 countries, of which one fifth went on to browse the downloads section. The downloads section contains CSR reports for all members published since 2005.

In response to requests for more regular Forum updates, we added a [Twitter feed](#) in 2010 and the number of followers currently stands at 362.

## **Plans for 2012**

### **Research publication on the 'brainprint' of media**

Coordinated by the Secretariat, the brainprint working group will be working towards a publication on the brainprint of media to be released in 2012. The objective is to write a report that will stimulate (and help frame) discussion on this emerging topic.

### **Ranking media CR issues**

A growing number of research bodies, rating agencies, industry bodies and international organisations are defining CR indicators that companies are encouraged/expected to report on. As the list keeps growing, Dr Rory Sullivan (see Activity Summary Q2) posed a challenge to the Forum: define your material issues before someone else does it for you. Taking Rory's cue, we have started work to rank the media CR issues identified in the 2008 [stakeholder survey](#). We will develop a first draft of the ranking based on feedback from member companies, which we will then consult on externally. We will publish the findings later in 2012.

## Forum costs and expenditure

	<b>Income</b>	<b>Of which ...</b>	<b>Projects</b>	<b>Other</b>
		<b>Administration</b>		
2009	£18,500	£18,200	£NIL	£ 300*
2010	£25,600	£21,000	£2,100**	£2,500***
2011	£27,550	£21,500	£3,650	£2,400****

\* Website construction and maintenance by external agency

\*\*'In Media We Trust?' event at LSE

\*\*\*Hire of lecture theatre and catering costs at LSE

\*\*\*\*Hire of conference venue at Royal College of Physicians, catering costs and reimbursement of speakers' travel costs

## Attendance overview

Two organisations, Aegis Media and Modern Times Group, joined the Forum in 2011 while two others left, WPP and EMI. The following table charts the attendance of members at the quarterly meetings in 2011.

	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
Aegis Media	Y	Y	N	Y
BBC	Y	Y	Y	N
BSkyB	Y	N	Y	Y
Channel 4	Y	Y	N	N
Guardian Media Group*	N	N	N	Y
Informa	Y	Y	Y	Y
IPC Media	Y	Y	N	Y
ITV	N	Y	N	N
Modern Times Group	Y	N	Y	Y
News International	Y	N	N	Y
Pearson	Y	N	Y	Y
Random House	Y	Y	Y	Y
Reed Elsevier	N	N	Y	Y
TF1	Y	Y	N	N
Trinity Mirror	Y	Y	Y	Y
Turner Broadcasting System Europe	Y	N	Y	N
United Business Media	N	Y	Y	N
Virgin Media	Y	N	Y	Y
Yell	N	N	Y	Y

\*Main contact on maternity leave for most of the year.