

## The Media CSR Forum Activity Report 2008

---

### Objectives and purpose

The "Media Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Forum" is a group of media organisations developing CSR and sustainability practices for the UK media sector.

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 from 2008.

### Membership

At the end of 2008, the members of the Forum were:

Aegis Group, The BBC, BSkyB, GCAP Media, Channel 4, EMI, Five, Guardian Media Group, Informa, IPC Media, ITV, MTV European Networks, Pearson, Reed Elsevier, TF1 Group, Trinity Mirror, Turner Broadcasting, United Business Media, Virgin Media, WPP and Yell Group.

### Secretariat

Acona Ltd continued to provide secretariat services to the group, and chaired group meetings throughout 2008. The secretariat is the first point of call for stakeholders and new member enquiries. Please telephone +44(0)207 812 7133

### Activity summary

#### Engaging with stakeholders

Most meetings include a presentation from a relevant stakeholder leading to a round-table discussion. During 2008 we met with the following:

- **UK Refugee Council** gave insights as to how the media affect perceptions on refugees.
- **WWF** presented the findings from its report *Weathercocks and Signposts* on the behavioural change needed to combat climate change.

- **Julie's Bicycle** presented its study on how to reduce the carbon footprint of the music industry
- **Ammado** talked about using online communities as a platform to promote CSR and charitable activities
- The **Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)** and **Linguistic Landscapes** shared the findings from their report *Warm Words: an analysis of UK constructions and conceptions of climate change in the public domain*.
- **International Alert** talked about the immense challenges faced by the world's poorest communities in the wake of climate change.
- **Futerra** discussed an initiative to improve the environmental content of the advertising and broadcasting sector, arguing that sustainability needs creativity.

## Identifying areas for focus

In 2008 we collectively conducted a survey to understand better stakeholders' opinions on the important and emerging CSR issues for our industry. The survey was supported with some face to face stakeholder meetings.

More than 100 opinion formers from the media and CSR fields responded to the survey, which showed up some interesting new trends as well as confirming many of those identified in our previous exercise (2003). The new areas were climate change, responsible advertising, staff diversity and awareness of the impacts of communication.

We will use these and other findings from the survey to guide future activities and increase public knowledge about the Forum's work.

## Media Literacy

The Forum, with its broad member base, believes that it is well placed to raise public awareness of media literacy, which we define as "the ability to access, critically understand and create media in its varying forms".

We spent much of 2008 exploring a print and online media campaign to promote awareness and signpost consumers to existing data sources. The scale and ambition of this initiative rose and fell with the political and other priorities of Forum members and other stakeholders (notably Ofcom). Towards the end of the year we took the decision to simplify and focus our plans to ensure that the project would launch in 2009.

Accordingly, this year will see the launch of a website containing stories showing 'how media is made'. The website will act as a central outlet for members to demonstrate how they deal with issues like commissioning content, ensuring accuracy and responding to consumer complaints. Using practical examples from real organisations, we aim to further the debate and develop the public's understanding of responsible media.

The website is meant to complement member companies' existing efforts in the area, not replace them. For this project, we continue to receive pro bono support from the creative team at Good Pilot ([www.goodpilot.co.uk](http://www.goodpilot.co.uk)), as well as five Forum members.

## US Media CSR Forum

In 2008 we made progress towards setting up a sister Forum for US companies. On October 17<sup>th</sup>, the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs, based in New York City, hosted a well-attended scoping event bringing together media companies, CSR practitioners and academics. Discussions are currently taking place about how best to proceed with a more permanent format.

## The Media CSR Forum website

www.mediacsforum.org attracts around 300 visitors per day and acts as the first point-of-entry for prospective members and inquiries about Forum activities. It also serves as a repository for relevant CSR initiatives in the media sector. For example, all members' CSR Reports for the past three years are available to download along with a selection of other material.

## Plans for 2009

2009 will see us overhauling the meeting format to allow more time for members to share best practice while maintaining the current high levels of stakeholder input.

We will also update the website to allow for better communication within the group and ensure that our work – and that of others – is easily accessible.

We will publish the findings from the 2008 media issues survey.

We will launch the *How Media is Made* website and identify ways to maintain its relevance by adding content on a regular basis.

The Forum will be actively recruiting new members. Membership is open to media owners and content producers of varying types and sizes including, new media, mobile media, independent production and communications agencies as well as more traditional broadcasters and publishers. Please direct enquiries to the Secretariat at mediacsforum@acona.com.

## Costs and expenditure

	Income	Of which ....		
		Administration	Stakeholder survey	Other
2007	£15,600	£14,100	£0	£1,500*
2008	£28,250	£16,000	£9,000	£3,250**

\* Website construction

\*\* Member donation to Plan UK to support a Children's Press Service in India

### Attendance overview

The following table charts the attendance of members at the quarterly meetings in 2008.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Aegis Group Plc	Y	Y	N	Y
BBC	Y	Y	N	N
BSkyB	Y	Y	N	Y
GCapMedia	Y	Y	Y	N
Channel 4	N	Y	N	Y
EMI	Y	N	N	N
Guardian Media Group	Y	N	N	Y
IPC Media	N	Y	N	Y
ITV Plc	Y	N	N	N
MTV Networks International	Y	N	N	N
News International	N/A	N	Y	N
Nickelodeon	N	<i>Resigned during the year</i>		
Outdoor Advertising Association	N	<i>Resigned during the year</i>		
Pearson	-	<i>Rejoined during the year</i>		
Reed Elsevier Group Plc	Y	Y	Y	Y
Informa	Y	N	Y	Y
TF1	<i>Joined during the year</i>			
Trinity Mirror plc	Y	Y	Y	Y
Turner Broadcasting System Europe	N	Y	N	Y
United Business Media Plc	Y	N	N	N
Virgin Media	Y	N	Y	N/A
WPP	N	N	N	N
Yell	Y	N	N	Y
Five Broadcasting	Y	N	N	N