

## CSR 2.0

### The New Era of Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility

***By Wayne Visser***

The field of what is variously known as CSR, sustainability, corporate citizenship and business ethics is ushering in a new era in the relationship between business and society.

Simply put, we are shifting from the old concept of CSR - the classic notion of "Corporate Social Responsibility", which I call CSR 1.0 - to a new, integrated conception - CSR 2.0, which can be more accurately labelled "Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility".

The allusion to Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 is no coincidence. The transformation of the internet through the emergence of social media networks, user-generated content and open source approaches is a fitting metaphor for the changes business is experiencing as it begins to redefine its role in society. Let's look at some of the similarities.

<b>Web 1.0</b>	<b>CSR 1.0</b>
A flat world just beginning to connect itself and finding a new medium to push out information and plug advertising.	A vehicle for companies to establish relationships with communities, channel philanthropic contributions and manage their image.
Saw the rise to prominence of innovators like Netscape, but these were quickly out-muscled by giants like Microsoft with its Internet Explorer.	Included many start-up pioneers like Traidcraft, but has ultimately turned into a product for large multinationals like Wal-Mart.
Focused largely on the standardised hardware and software of the PC as its delivery platform, rather than multi-level applications.	Travelled down the road of "one size fits all" standardisation, through codes, standards and guidelines to shape its offering.
<b>Web 2.0</b>	<b>CSR 2.0</b>
Being defined by watchwords like "collective intelligence", "collaborative networks" and "user participation".	Being defined by "global commons", "innovative partnerships" and "stakeholder involvement".
Tools include social media, knowledge syndication and beta testing.	Mechanisms include diverse stakeholder panels, real-time transparent reporting and new-wave social entrepreneurship.
Is as much a state of being as a technical advance - it is a new philosophy or way of seeing the world differently.	Is recognising a shift in power from centralised to decentralised; a change in scale from few and big to many and small; and a change in application from single and exclusive to multiple and shared.

As our world becomes more connected and global challenges like climate change and poverty loom ever larger, businesses that still practice CSR 1.0 will (like their Web 1.0 counterparts) be rapidly left behind. Highly conscientised and networked stakeholders will expose them and gradually withdraw their social licence to operate. By contrast, companies that embrace the CSR 2.0 era will

be those that collaboratively find innovative ways tackle our global challenges and be rewarded in the marketplace as a result.

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