



## BSR Conference 2008 | Sustainability: Leadership Required Is IT So Green?

Breakout Session Summary

Wednesday, November 5, 2008 | 10-11:30 a.m.

### Speakers

- **Rick Hutley**, Vice President of Global Innovations, Internet Business Solutions Group, Cisco
- **Steve Lippman**, Director of Environmental Engagement Strategy, Microsoft
- **Dennis Pamlin**, Global Policy Advisor, WWF
- **Dunstan Hope**, Director of ICT Practice, Advisory Services, Business for Social Responsibility (moderator)

### Highlights

- The potential for information technology (IT) to enable individuals and companies to “go green” far outweighs the negative impact of the IT industry’s carbon footprint.
- While companies historically have looked at how to reduce the carbon emissions associated with their IT and equipment use, they increasingly need to be looking at how to deploy IT to reduce carbon emissions in all other parts of business.
- Unleashing the full benefits of IT requires a perception and behavioral shift, where individuals consciously use IT as a sustainability solution and establish metrics to track the benefits.

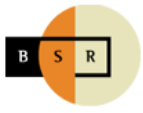
### Memorable Quotes

- “The question is: What are the goods and services you can provide to help society move to a low-carbon economy?” —Dennis Pamlin, WWF
- “Most people will do the right thing if you give them the opportunity, but you need to tell them what they’re consuming and how to consume less.” —Rick Hutley, Cisco
- “Technology is the easier part of the equation. [Going green] is a people problem and an institution problem.” —Steve Lippman, Microsoft

### Overview

Pamlin kicked off the session by pointing out that while the IT industry is reportedly responsible for 2 percent of global emissions, the remaining 98 percent represents an opportunity for IT to enable emissions reductions. Historically, opportunities for using IT to reduce environmental impacts have been viewed as marginal, but Pamlin argued that there’s





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a need and potential for the IT industry to create radical change. He urged companies to look for strategic IT investments that can trigger further, long-term reductions. He also emphasized the need for measuring and communicating the “carbon positive” contributions an IT company provides, which would be a new form of carbon accounting.

Lippman agreed that there are significant opportunities for IT to help mitigate climate change, such as through teleconferencing, which has helped individuals reduce emissions associated with travel. Lippman also recommended applying Moore’s Law to energy efficiency—doubling technology output while keeping energy use flat—or moving toward bio-computing, where computing is shifted to data centers.

Hutley cautioned that IT’s potential for being “green” depends on how people choose to *use* technology. He emphasized that individuals need to approach IT with a clear objective of increasing sustainability, and measuring measure impact is an important way to achieve maximum benefits. For example, when shifting to a “connected workplace,” where a company’s employees work remotely, a company needs to actively track the sustainability impact, which for Cisco showed a 58 percent reduction in carbon emissions.

While IT can provide significant cost savings, Lippman said cost savings alone will not drive change; new incentive structures and performance measurements need to be implemented in order to change behaviors and reduce the cultural barriers that are currently preventing significant emissions reductions. Hutley added that IT can change behavior just by conveying to individuals the potential for impact associated with people’s actions.

In response to questions, the panel recommended that the new U.S. presidential administration adopt aggressive targets and implement stronger incentives in order to drive cultural and behavioral shifts. Pamlin added that the targets need to go well beyond the Kyoto Protocol in order to create transformational change.

Lastly, the panel commented on how IT has allowed remote communities and individuals at the base of the pyramid to play a greater role in global society for very low cost. As companies consider their impacts, Pamlin suggested applying the “nine billion test”: Can the product serve the projected population without having a significant impact on the environment?

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This summary is also available on [www.bsr.org/bsrconferences/2008/session-summaries.cfm](http://www.bsr.org/bsrconferences/2008/session-summaries.cfm).

