What do internet service providers care about?

October 3 2012

A research paper to be published in the *World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development* suggests that despite the public pronouncements on corporate and social responsibility made by leading Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the UK, profit and shareholders remains the greatest concern for these organisations.

Peter Jones and Daphne Comfort of the Business School at the University of Gloucestershire and David Hillier of the University of Glamorgan, UK, wanted to find out whether there was also some corporate social responsibility (CSR), among the UK's leading ISPs. Fundamentally, the team found that all the ISPs analyzed provided some information on a range of CSR commitments and achievements in the marketplace, the workplace and the community. The companies also provided information on their environmental agenda although there is considerable variation in the extent of that information, the team discovered. Given the recent furore regarding energy-consumption by cloud services and mobile devices and the carbon footprint of internet data centres and telecommunications installations, this issue is at the forefront of the eco debate once more.

"The internet is a very powerful communications media and while it offers a wide and constantly expanding range of services and facilities it also generates a number of problems," the team says.

The researchers point out that this media hinges on the ISPs' role in

supplying consumers with digital access, of course. Their analysis also showed that the majority of the UK's top ISPs publicly report some of the social and environmental impacts of their business operations. Moreover they also show how they are seeking to address the issues that arise. Ultimately, however, the stance of ISPs to [corporate social responsibility](#) is essentially driven as much by business imperatives as by any real concern for environmental or social issues, the team asserts. The perhaps inevitable and obvious answer to the question of what do ISPs care about is that mostly they care about their businesses and their bottom line.

  More information: "Corporate social responsibility and the UK's leading internet service providers" in *World Review of Entrepreneurship, Management and Sustainable Development*, 2012, 8, 318.

Provided by Inderscience Publishers