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FreePint is an online network of information searchers. Members receive this free newsletter twice a month: it is packed with tips on finding quality and reliable business information on the Internet.

Joining is free at <<http://www.freepint.com/>> and provides access to a substantial archive of articles, reviews, jobs & events, with answers to research questions and networking at the FreePint Bar.

Please circulate this newsletter which is best read when printed out. To receive this fully formatted version as an attachment or a brief notification when it's online, visit <<http://web.freepint.com/>>.

Editorial

You can't miss how everything at the moment seems to require a vote. Whether it's who should go through to the next round of the latest pop-celebrity-singing-dancing-quiz, or whether it's about more serious topics like who should be included as a commissioner by the incoming President of the European Commission. It's a topical debate, since both articles in today's FreePint cover European issues. And, yes, we are aware that there's another big vote taking place across the pond, but, unlike most other media, we're not commenting on that.



I suppose it's only right that everyone should have their say - be it by phone, text, email, post - but I certainly don't like the way that newsreaders now read out text messages as if they are informed comment on a current debate. A London news channel has also just started asking people with camera-phones to register as 'eye witnesses', to be dispatched to events as they're happening. I look forward to seeing low-quality photos and movie clips whilst being read low-value text messages. I don't consider this journalism. What do you think? Text your comments to me and I'll include them in the next issue.

The UK's Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) <<http://www.cilip.org.uk>> has gone to a postal vote after last week's AGM about proposals for new flat-rate membership fees. I'm pleased about this and think it's the right thing to do. If you're a CILIP member, then make sure you cast your vote. After the way their name-change was handled, the SLA <<http://www.sla.org>> could learn a few things about how to ask their members what they want.

We're looking forward to talking to FreePinters at this year's Online Information show in London, UK, which is coming up at the end of November. If you haven't booked your place at the conference, or ordered your free exhibition ticket yet, then make sure you do so at <<http://www.online-information.co.uk>>.

VIP <<http://www.vivaVIP.com/>> has just published its review of Dialog NewsRoom, which it compares with Factiva and LexisNexis. Last month's comparative review of these two products was hugely popular, and VIP's Editor Pam Foster will be with us at Online Information for you to give her your feedback about her sterling work.

Finally, congratulations to Annabel Colley on the birth of her baby girl last week. We're all delighted for her, and if you want to send wishes then address them to <annabel.colley@freepint.com> and we'll make sure Annabel receives them.

So, we too are trying to provide plenty of opportunities for you to give your feedback to FreePint, both virtually and face-to-face. Remember, if you're an eye witness to anything that's happening in the information world then make sure you capture it on your camera-phone and send it in.

William Hann
Managing Editor, FreePint
<william.hann@freepint.com>

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The FreePint Jobs Update is being circulated widely every two weeks. This free newsletter now has 2,000 direct subscribers and is posted at the Bar and in the Bar Digest (circulation 12,000).

To see the Jobs Update No.83 and read the new 'Jobs Advice' section, visit <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30368>>. To subscribe, modify your account at <<http://web.freepint.com>>.

Fully-formatted PDF version available at: <<http://web.freepint.com/jobs/FreePint-Jobs-Update-83.pdf>>

Here are some of the latest featured jobs:

Senior Researcher, Capital Markets

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3510>>

This role is one of several corporate finance research roles now available; the market is moving, is it time for you to as well? Recruiter: Sue Hill Recruitment

Senior Sector Information Specialist

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3614>>

Senior level Information Sector Specialist vacancy for bright person with intellect, gravitas and very confident personality. Recruiter: Glen Recruitment

Freelance IT Trainers

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/j3615>>

A new income opportunity in your area for confident IT users who would like to train, mostly beginners, in their home locality. Recruiter: Hairnet UK Ltd

NB: There are 47 other jobs in the current edition of the Jobs Update

<<http://www.freepint.com/go/30136>>.

[The above jobs are paid listings]

New: VIP compares Dialog NewsRoom to Factiva and LexisNexis

Following last month's Factiva / LexisNexis comparative review, the current VIP compares them both with Dialog:

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My Favourite Tipples by John Gabree



Writer and SEO consultant John Gabree's thoughts about culture and politics appear on *Impractical Proposals* <<http://www.ImpracticalProposals.com/>>. He recently introduced *eGlossary* <<http://www.eGlossary.com/>> and *LOL: Library of Links* <<http://libraryoflinks.blogspot.com>>.

Submit your top five favourite Web sites. See the guidelines at <<http://www.freepint.com/author.htm>>.

- All Music Guide (AMG) <<http://www.allmusic.com/>> is the source I turn to for reviews and profiles for every genre of non-classical music. AMG lets you search by group, song or album.
- Largehearted Boy <<http://blog.largeheartedboy.com/>> is a surprisingly fertile place to find new free music and links to the latest reviews and commentary.
- When I need an infusion of politics but I want to stay upbeat, I download broadcasts from Air America <<http://www.airamericaradio.com/>>, the politics, comedy and talk network started by Al Franken.
- Backflip <<http://www.backflip.com/>> is an online bookmarking site. Since I travel a lot, I find it invaluable to have all my bookmarks available wherever I go!
- And while travelling, I find the World's Best Bars <<http://www.worldsbestbars.com/>> more than a little useful, especially in particularly alien environments.

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Willco, VIP and ResourceShelf at Online Information

Visit us on stand 292 at London's Online Information 2004 from 30th November - 2nd December and talk to us about the range of sites in the Willco network.

Online Information:
<http://www.online-information.co.uk/>
Willco Network:
<http://www.willco.com/customers/>

Onopoly: Advertising with FreePint, VIP and DigBig

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Whilst preparing this review, it occurred to me that it's actually quite difficult to keep abreast of new happenings at the Bar by simply visiting periodically. That's why so many members (over 13,000 now) receive the twice-weekly Bar Digest. You can choose a plain text or HTML version and it's free to sign up at <<http://www.freepint.com/subs/>>. There are also free 'feeds' of the latest postings, which you can find out more about at <<http://www.freepint.com/feed/>>.

Information professionals are always welcome at the Bar, of course, and it's interesting to see discussion of topics like the inter-library loan of electronic resources <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30344>>. There have been various suggestions on how to limit a search to a specific range of Web sites <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30286>>. Can you add to the suggestions about where a recently qualified postgrad can learn how to use content management systems and cataloguing? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30380>>.

The latest Jobs Update has comment on the state of the job market from industry-luminary Sue Hill <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30368>>, whilst the FreePint Events database has a number of new listings <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30341>>.

VIP's review of Dialog NewsRoom, and how it has been compared to Factiva and LexisNexis, has been announced at the VIP Lounge <<http://www.vivavip.com/go/l82>>. You can request a free weekly Digest of postings from the VIP Lounge and VIP Wire (the press release database) at <<http://www.vivavip.com/order/digest/>>.

The VIP review includes company information coverage, the topic of a number of Bar postings in the last couple of weeks. One enquirer wants UK company rankings by industry/sector for the UK and Europe <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30377>>, whilst another is looking specifically at the UK manufacturing labour market <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30401>>.

Trickier requests include someone wanting to know about UK family firms and their use of non-family members <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30373>>. Is there research into John Lewis's use of art/design in marketing <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30420>>, or a breakdown of employee statistics by industry? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30399>>. Thanks to those who suggested sites with information on where to find contacts in specific UK localities <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30361>>.

Finally, a couple of computer-related questions: Is there an easy way to remove temp files (.tmp) from a number of computers? <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30406>>; What about a single-handed keyboard <<http://www.freepint.com/go/b30389>> for the FreePinter who surely deserves the award for 'most interesting topics at the FreePint Bar'. Everyone wants his job, for the variety alone.

William Hann <william.hann@freepint.com>
Managing Editor, FreePint

- The FreePint Bar is where you can get free help with your tricky research questions <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>
- Help with study for information-related courses is available at the FreePint Student Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/student>>.
- Twice-weekly email digests of the latest postings can be requested at <<http://web.freepint.com/>>.

Tips Article

"European Industrial Relations Sources" By Kay Renfrew



Kay Renfrew is a Consultant at Oakleigh Consulting Ltd <<http://www.oakleigh.co.uk>>. She has a Masters degree in Information Management, and has carried out projects for a number of European Commission Directorates and Agencies. These include work on the development of EIROOnline and EMIRE, and various other projects for EFILWC. At Oakleigh (one of the Sunday Times Tech Track Top 100 fastest growing unquoted companies) she specialises in information management consultancy and research, and the management of business and technical information for its clients in the private, government, health, education, housing, financial services and utilities sectors. Kay can be contacted at <kayrenfrew@oakleigh.co.uk>.

The sources in this article look at developments in industrial relations in a European context, rather than providing sources on the industrial relations situation in each Member State. By consulting these sources, readers should be able to obtain an overview of the main themes under discussion and areas of future research, and then to focus in on those areas that are of particular interest to them.

European Union and International sources

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EFILWC) <<http://www.eurofound.eu.int>> must be the first port of call for anyone wanting to find out about industrial relations in Europe. The Foundation, based in Dublin, is an agency of the European Commission and is part of Directorate-General Employment and Social Affairs. The Foundation provides data and analysis to inform and shape EU policy on working and living conditions, through research and development projects. It reports to an administrative board made up of governmental, trade union and employer representatives from throughout the European Union and to members of the European Commission <<http://www.eurofound.eu.int/about/board.htm>>.

Industrial relations is one of the Foundation's core areas of expertise <<http://www.eurofound.eu.int/industrial/industrial.htm>>. It monitors changes in industrial relations and analyses developments through the main monitoring instruments and related databases, outlined below.

EIRO - European Industrial Relations Observatory. - The Observatory's website <<http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/>> provides news and analysis. Its database, EIROOnline, is organised to allow users to look at comparative information such as annual reviews of industrial relations developments in Europe, comparison of the EU with Japan and the USA, and national reports. The database also offers comparative and thematic studies across countries; information on individual Member States (plus the USA, Japan and Norway), information organised by industrial sector. There is a simple and advanced search option, which includes the use of a thesaurus of terms.

The EIROObserver bulletin <<http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/eiroobserver.html>> provides a bi-monthly selection of news and features, downloadable from the site. Alternatively, by registering on the site users automatically receive a copy by email.

The list of industrial relations links <<http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/relatedsites.html>> is a useful resource, grouped by country, and organised into Employers, Trade Unions, Government, and Others; plus links to EU institutions and related organisation.

EMIRE - European Employment and Industrial Relations Glossary - <<http://www.eurofound.eu.int/emire/emire.html>> is a very useful source to negotiate through

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industrial relations jargon or any terms that are unfamiliar. Users can browse an alphabetical list of terms (at present for the fifteen Member States prior to the enlargement of May 2004) or can search across all or a selection of countries for a particular term. Plans are in place to expand the definitions of the newly joined States, plus terms relevant at an EU level.

PECS - Pacts for employment and competitiveness - the database <<http://www.eurofound.eu.int/industrial/pecscstudies/sectors.htm>> comprises 30 case studies from 11 member states on collective agreements between employer and employee organisations on employment and competitiveness. The information is searchable or browsable by country or industrial sector.

Directorate-General Employment and Social Affairs <http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/index.html> has responsibility for industrial relations, and is the institution to which the EFILWC reports. Although many of its priorities and objectives broadly concern industrial relations, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-dial/index_en.htm> provides specific information on industrial relations and industrial change. Reference to EMIRE (mentioned above) may be useful when consulting this material. The site provides news, reports, policies and official communications on developments in industrial relations at an EU level, and includes calls for proposals for research.

CORDIS - Community Research and Development Information Service provides a further source of information on research into industrial relations with a study on entrepreneurial innovation in Europe <<http://www.cordis.lu/innovation-policy/studies/2002/relations.html>> in particular the section on the impact of industrial relations on innovation. Another research study on Industrial Relations as a key to strengthening innovation in Europe can be downloaded from .

The International Labour Organisation International Industrial Relations Association The IIRA <<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/iira/>> was set up to develop and exchange knowledge in industrial relations at an international level. It produces a Directory of Industrial Relations Institutes and Centres worldwide, involved in research and training <<http://iira.free.fr/>>. The alphabetical listing has links to summary information providing contact details for each organisation (including websites) and the type of research and publications produced.

Trade Union and Employer Federation sources

Directly involved in shaping industrial relations, and affected by developments in them, both trade union and employer organisations are useful sources of information.

Related FreePint links:

- 'Finance and Business' articles in the FreePint Portal <<http://www.freepint.com/go/p50>>
- Post a message to the author, Kay Renfrew, or suggest further resources at the FreePint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar>>
- Read this article online, with activated hyperlinks <<http://www.freepint.com/issues/281004.htm#tips>>
- Access the entire archive of FreePint content <http://www.freepint.com/portal/content/>

The European Trade Union Conference (ETUC), recognised by the European Union as the only representative cross-sector trade union organisation at European level, has a membership of over 70 national trade union confederations from 35 European Countries. Its site <<http://www.etuc.org/en/>> has a Dossier section with a number of categories under the heading of Industrial Relations and Social Dialogue. Each category comprises ETUC press releases and resolutions, relevant EU Council Directives, other relevant documents, and links to other organisations involved.

The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) ETUI is the research arm of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). Its Documentation Centre <<http://www.etuc.org/etui/publications/default.cfm>> provides details of ETUI publications and reports, some of which have downloadable sample chapters or table of contents.

Around two times a year the ETUI also produces a bulletin, Infoletter, which reports on its research work. A PDF version is available on the site at <<http://digbig.com/4catd>>. Also available for download is a yearly activity report for the ETUI, which summarises the main research themes dominating that year. Copies (PDF format) are at <<http://www.etuc.org/ETUI/Publications/Activity/default.cfm>>.

Another information source provided by ETUI is Labourline <<http://www.labourline.org/etui.htm>> the online catalogue of the ETUI Documentation Centre. This database, jointly managed by the European Trade Union Bureau for Health and Safety (TUTB), contains bibliographical references to a broad range of publications related to industrial relations and health and safety (beyond those published by ETUI).

The Federation of European Employers (FedEE) describes itself as the leading organisation for international employers operating across Europe. <<http://www.fedee.com/about.html>> and is a membership organisation based in London. The information it provides is therefore aimed at employers, and includes summaries of industrial relations in Europe (not just EU Member States) organised by country <<http://www.fedee.com/condits.html>>. Information in the summaries covers the industrial relations climate (for example, the proportion of the workforce in a trade union), legal employment framework (such as the minimum working age), and other details (such as the prevalence of collective bargaining). The site also provides a league table of strikes and lockouts organised by country <<http://www.fedee.com/strikes.html>>, and descriptions on how individual and collective disputes are handled by specialist labour courts in six European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain) <<http://www.fedee.com/labcourts.html>>.

The Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE) <<http://www.unice.org>> acts as the employers federations' spokesperson to European Institutions, and comprises 36 members and 29 observer organisations. It sits on the EFILWC administrative board. The Confederation does not present itself as an information resource, but can still be a useful reference point, for example

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through its regular news bulletin UNICE@NEWS, and through its Links section.

Journals

A number of journals provide in-depth information on industrial relations in Europe. These include three journals from Blackwell Publishing:

- Industrial Relations Journal covers industrial relations worldwide, but has a particular focus on Europe. Subscribers also receive the European Annual Review with chapters on different aspects of industrial relations analysed in the context of the prevailing political and economic situation. Details at <<http://digbig.com/4cath>>.
- Labour: Review of Labour Economics and Industrial Relations, published on behalf of CEIS and the Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini in Rome <<http://digbig.com/4catf>>.
- Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society, aims to offer an international (not solely European) perspective on economic, sociological, psychological, political, historical and legal developments in labour and employment <<http://digbig.com/4catg>>.

ETUC publish their own journal - Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research - that aims to stimulate dialogue between the European trade union movement and the academic and research community, and to provide research findings of practical value to trade unions <<http://www.etuc.org/ETUI/Publications/Transfer/default.cfm>>.

Miscellaneous sources

The REINET list <<http://listes.cru.fr/wvs/info/reinet>> focuses on industrial relations in France, but with a comparative perspective on other European countries and the developed world.

Andrew Bibby is a journalist who has written for the ILO, European Commission, UK DTI and others on industrial relations. His website <<http://www.andrewbibby.com/socialpartners.html>> has a selection of his articles and reports.

Conclusion

Obviously, in an article of this length, the list of sources is not definitive. I hope that they will provide a good starting point for further research, and point to authoritative sources at the EU-level and in each of the European countries. If anyone is aware of any other resources, I would be interested to hear of them, or perhaps you could post them to the FreePint Bar <<http://www.freepint.com/bar/>>.



Dr Derek Stephens' teaching and research interests at the Department of Information Science, Loughborough University, include competitive intelligence and marketing for information professionals. He is Project Director for the FDTL5 project to enhance the provision of 'skills-based' teaching materials, which focus on the vocational skills needed for the workplace and complement the academic elements of the degree.

Dr Stephens has been a manager in a Fortune 500 oil and gas exploration company in Canada and was previously the Executive Director of the Atlantic Publishing Association.

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<<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1573871737/freepint00>>
- "Assessing competitive intelligence software: a guide to evaluating CI software" ISBN 1573871737, published by Information Today Inc.

FreePint Bookshelf

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"Assessing competitive intelligence software: a guide to evaluating CI software"

Written by France Bouthillier and Kathleen Shearer

Reviewed by Derek Stephens

The scope of Competitive Intelligence (CI) is far wider than just gathering information about the activities of competitors. An effective CI operation will instead encompass the skilful management of information about a range of factors that have an impact on business performance. It will also include informed analysis and exploitation of that information in productive decision-making and action. However, as the volume of information accessible to business has continued to increase, it has become more difficult for organisations to discern the valuable nuggets, let alone detect connections between them. Software packages for competitive intelligence seek to provide the solution, but how effective are they?

France Bouthillier and Kathleen Shearer explain these issues and address the above question in this practical combination of textbook and 'how-to' guide which is a very readable addition to the growing body of CI-related literature. Its appeal lies in its ability to inform and educate not only on the evaluation of competitive intelligence (CI) software, but also on the underlying principles and processes that transform information into intelligence. It will be of value to anyone with an interest in the improvement of business competitiveness, whether SME owner/manager, information professional, lecturer or student; CI software designers too will find insight within.

Whilst many conceptual models of CI exist, the authors of this book demonstrate -- via a strong literature review -- how the competitive intelligence function is the result of sound information management combined with smart analysis. This commonsense application of information management processes to the CI cycle distinguishes Bouthillier and Shearer's

conceptual model from others. Crucially, it identifies the role of CI software as being more than a tool to save time and money, but more importantly to add value to basic information to make it actionable, i.e. prepared for use in effective decision-making.

From this credible foundation, the authors go on to develop a readily accessible and logical method for evaluating CI software, with 32 related criteria. The result is a practical checklist for anyone involved in the process of evaluating software for CI. A discussion of the evolution of the CI software market follows, before the application of the criteria to today's leading software applications. This enables in-depth discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of each package, although the authors stress that they do not attempt to make recommendations, rather they seek practical application of their assessment criteria.

The products to which the evaluation criteria are applied in this book will develop and change. The real strength of this book lies in its definition of practical criteria for evaluating CI software, which will remain valuable for years to come.

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Feature Article



Nick Paget-Brown is owner and editor of UK Environment News, a subscription newsletter which is published every 6 weeks. It is read by a wide range of companies and public-sector organisations in the UK and is an essential research and current awareness tool for senior managers wanting early warning of environmental policy developments in the UK and EU. The newsletter is published online at <<http://www.ukendata.com>>, where there is also a fully searchable six year archive and a discussion forum for expert advice and help.

"How European companies can turn the challenge of environmental regulation into profit"

By Nick Paget-Brown

Just as Philip Larkin told us that sexual intercourse began in 1963, so the keener environmentalists will tell you that in Europe, it was the EU's First Environmental Action Programme of 1973-1976 that marked the deliberate start of a comprehensive attempt to limit our impacts on the environment. In the thirty years that have passed since that modest beginning, this environmental revolution has had a considerable impact on the business world, although far less influence on our conscious lifestyle choices as consumers.

6th Environmental Action Programme

2004 marks the third year of what has now become the 6th Environmental Action Programme <<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/newprg/>>. Although this sets the framework for achieving a range of desirable environmental outcomes in the period until 2010, the Programme and its contents are required to take their place in the eternal battle of priorities between enhancing environmental protection, maintaining the EU's international competitiveness and meeting the challenge of creating a single internal market.

The EU now has 25 Member States at very different stages of development and with very different attitudes towards the environment. Achieving complete harmony will involve great costs for many new members and will be one of the key issues facing the new Environment Commissioner, Stavros Dimas, when he takes up office next month <http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/environment/index_en.htm>.

Within the wider political world, the environment, with its greener- than-green NGO outriders, remains a potentially dangerous beast, able to do considerable damage to political and corporate fortunes if neglected. A range of key issues need watching. Companies determined to outpace their rivals and provide additional shareholder value are already attuned to this. Those that fail to see the threats and opportunities which derive from greater environmental regulation are leaving themselves open to greater risks than ever before.

The International Perspective

The driver of this green revolution has been the European Union. 80% of all UK environmental legislation now has its origins in European Directives.

Everything from fridge disposal to vehicle emissions, through river water quality, the construction of incinerators, the use of packaging, energy, waste and water infrastructure, pollution abatement, ownership and development of contaminated land, production of chemicals and policy on climate change, is subject to framework legislation drawn up in Brussels <<http://www.ieep.org/>>.

International Treaties such as Kyoto, the Montreal Protocol on ozone depleting substances <<http://www.ciesin.org/TG/PI/POLICY/montpro.html>>, WTO trade rounds and UN Conventions and Declarations such as the Johannesburg summit on sustainable development in 2002 all require Governments to take action at national level by agreed deadlines. Even companies that don't consider themselves directly affected by much of this may find that their clients or suppliers are faced with new regulatory requirements.

A clear agenda of incorporating the cost of environmental impacts into the pricing of products has been implicit in the EU ever since the early days of the 1970s.

Environmental reform has had to steer between the Scylla of driving up standards and challenging the culture of waste and the Charybdis of Europe's need to liberalise markets and meet international competition. This equation is given additional complexity because we all like cheap products and all have a vote. Elected politicians have come to realise that, although we profess to be concerned about environmental impacts, we

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don't always react favourably to the higher prices and life-style changes which tackling them often demands.

So, the Environment Directorate (DG Env) within the Commission may initiate a Directive protecting the environment - but will need to do battle with other parts of the Commission to ensure that it is not hampering internal market reforms or making the EU uncompetitive in global markets. It is at the stage of policy formulation within the Commission that many companies are failing to make their voice heard.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/index_en.htm.

Once proposals emerge from the Commission, they face scrutiny and amendment by the Environment Committee of the European Parliament <http://www.europarl.eu.int/comparl/envi/default_en.htm> and must then be approved by the Council of Ministers.

Depending on the proposal, this will either be by qualified majority or will require unanimity. The Parliament and the Council have rights of co-decision and where they cannot reach agreement a conciliation mechanism springs into action. Once a Directive is adopted, Member States are required to transpose it into national law by an agreed date.

The Impact of Producer Responsibility

In general, politicians do not like to confront consumers directly with the consequences of our own profligacy. Therefore, a number of ingenious mechanisms have been developed to avoid such a stark confrontation.

"Producer responsibility" requires manufacturers to take responsibility for sustainable production. Any changes in production or materials-use that this may require can be passed on to the consumer in higher prices, but the linkage between government, policy and cost is indirect. The external impacts on the environment are quietly internalised in the price and the "polluter pays" objective is met.

More overt taxation can change consumption habits abruptly and consumers can react with hostility as they did during the fuel price protests in the UK in 2000. The fuel price escalator was also dropped and VAT on fuel cut when consumer cries of pain became too anguished.

This preference for taxing production rather than consumption has led to the development of instruments such as the Climate Change Levy, the landfill tax and the Aggregates Levy.

Ingenious new market tools have also been developed. In the UK these include the Packaging Recovery Note (PRN), to show that packaging has been recycled, and the Renewables Obligation Certificate (ROC). Under the Renewables Obligation, electricity suppliers are required to provide 10.4% of supply from renewable sources by March 2011. ROCS are proof that they are meeting this requirement.

Next year will see the introduction of the European Emissions Trading scheme <<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/emission.htm>>, to allow companies in polluting sectors of industry to trade carbon emissions allowances.

What is the ResourceShelf?

<<http://www.resourceshelf.com>>

ResourceShelf is a free daily update containing news of interest to information professionals around the world.

Topics include the latest news with web search engines, research tips, new web resources, and much more.

In the UK, the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) from next April will introduce an instrument which local authorities can use to trade spare landfill capacity with those who need it. The draconian Landfill Directive is now the main determinant of UK waste policy.

Even the current review of water pricing for the five year period 2005 - 2010 builds in an element for capital investment in improving the water infrastructure. Keep an eye out too for possible taxes on pesticides and nitrates.

There is an argument that, because all these costs are hidden, although ultimately passed on to the consumer, we are not really being directly confronted with the cost of our own environmental profligacy. The suggestion that householders, for example, might face a direct charge related to the volume and content of waste in their dustbin is still thought too controversial for UK voters, despite our poor recycling rates compared with European neighbours.

Incentives for segregating waste, minimising the content of bins and recycling are likely to be the way forward. Public sector cash is currently pouring into waste management and recycling initiatives <<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/wi/p/>>.

New standards can stimulate new markets. Rising disposal or raw material costs can lead to the development of more environmentally friendly alternatives. Hypothecated tax revenues can provide a new source of capital investment. All of these instruments are currently introducing a substantial new dynamic into product pricing. However, whatever the benefits, transparent it is not. It may be good for the planet but it has rarely been explicitly endorsed by the voters.

The Need for Timely Information

The well run corporation has to know about these things more than ever before. Once upon a time, a passing knowledge of the Health and Safety Act was probably the only substantive piece of legislation that company managers needed to worry about.

Now, quite apart from keeping tabs on a whole raft of new legislation, Directives, statutory instruments and regulatory impact assessments, the alert company director needs to be aware of "reputation management", of "corporate social responsibility", of more transparent environmental reporting requirements, of "naming and shaming", and of the pressures from NGOs. Our own website at <<http://www.ukendata.com>> can help solve this information need.

Boards can face accusations of corporate manslaughter, of incurring new environmental liabilities, of failing to report environmental impacts, of being unaware of planning guidance. Even when they try to do the right thing environmentally, as Shell did with its plans to dismantle North Sea platforms offshore, the insistence that they should have brought the platforms back to port for dismantling was furious and damaging. Subsequently, most experts agreed that disposal at sea would have been less environmentally harmful.

The Profit Opportunity

So environmental regulation is here to stay, with companies bearing the brunt of cleaning up Europe. This will create new opportunities for "bottom-line" savings as raw material consumption is cut, tax bills are minimised and productive processes are streamlined and harmonised.

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