Ethics and social responsibility in the professions

4th annual symposium on developing socially responsible professionals

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RESOURCES

LONG TERM

SINCERITY

MARKET

Social responsibility in the professions

4th annual symposium on developing socially responsible professionals

GOAL

SUSTAINABILITY

ETHICS

RESPONSIBILITY

Key:

Social responsibility is occasionally abbreviated to "**SR**"

ESG – Environmental, Social and Governance

CSR – Corporate social responsibility

SMEs – small and medium-sized companies

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The next Developing Social Responsibility in the Professions symposium will be at City University on **Wednesday 10th January 2024**

Contents

Welcome and opening address

Professions must accept and define their key role in societal governance

Professor Sir Anthony Finkelstein
President, City, University of London

City, University of London has a rich history as an agent of social mobility. From its earliest roots, the institution has served a mission to educate some of the poorest parts of society and through a close association with the City livery companies, to support trades and craft skills.

The Northampton Institute, the precursor to City, had the objective of promoting "the industrial skill general knowledge, health and wellbeing of young men and women belonging to the poorer classes". The first departments established in the institute were Mechanical Engineering and Metal Trades, Artistic Crafts for Industry, Applied Physics and Electrical Engineering, Horology, Electrochemistry and Domestic Economy.

This discussion is about the social responsibilities of professions. Why should we debate this?

Professions are moving from a situation where they were a closed shop agreeing standards and regulating access, to being woven into the structure of societal governance.

Look at the health professions. A broader expectation of health for society must be integrated with an understanding about how the health professions work. The professions are not standalone and how the profession operates forms part of the way we govern society.

The bargain we must strike as professionals is if we want to be part of the system that defines societal governance, if we want professional trust and our own systems of professional regulation to have wider import, then we must develop a model for social responsibility.

Finally, a controversial point. I would counsel everyone to think we should aim for collective notions of social responsibility that are not exclusively driven by liberal narratives. It is right that we look at the dominating societal issues – global climate change, sustainability, poverty, global health inequities – but alongside a liberal frame for this we may also wish to place a conservative frame as well, like stewardship, which places a different weight on these responsibilities. In doing so I suspect that we will be able to achieve a broader reach for our commitment to socially responsible professionals and a richer and more sustainable dialogue.

Welcome to the event.

Programme
Theme: Ethics and social responsibility

MORNING SESSION	
Welcome and Opening Address	**Professions must accept and define their key role in societal governance** Professor Anthony Finkelstein
Setting the Challenge	**Social responsibility in STEM expands to all professions, which must work to establish trust** Professor Rajkumar Roy, Executive Dean, School of Science and Technology, and social responsibility lead at City, University of London
Keynote addresses (20-30 minutes each)	**Metaverse Ethics** Professor Victoria Baines, WCIT Professor of IT at Gresham College
	How our view of value shapes our ethical decisions Andrew Baughen, Chaplain and Visiting Lecturer at Bayes Business School
	Medical Ethics Professor Stephen O'Connor, Royal Academy of Engineering Visiting Professor at City, University of London, Fellow of IPEM
Panel debate 1	**Ethics in different professions – UG and PG curriculum requirements** Chair: Andrew Vautier (Senior Managing Director at Accenture) The panel featured the morning speakers and Professor Felician Campean Associate Dean – Research & Innovation, University of Bradford, and Professor Sanowar Khan, Prof of Instrumentation and Sensors at City
AFTERNOON SESSION	
Keynote addresses (30 mins each)	**Embedding social responsibility in higher education** Professor Nalin Thakkar, Vice-President of The University of Manchester
	We shouldn't always do it just because it's technically possible Professor Andy Phippen, Professor of Digital Rights at Bournemouth University
	Social responsibility and employability Dr Manny Contomanolis, Director of Career Services at Harvard University
	ESG white paper Julia George, Court Liveryman at the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists
Panel debate 2	**Social responsibility and professional development** Chair: Rob Wirszycz, Master at the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists This panel featured the afternoon speakers and Prof Mike Sutcliffe, newly appointed President of the Engineering Professors' Council.
Summary and close	**The key topic that the 4th symposium debates is ethics in STEM industries, but it also touches on:** Diversity, unconscious bias and equality | Corporate social responsibility | Global sustainable programmes | Cultural differences and practice | Legislation and regulation | Business and research ethics | Circular economy | Leadership and social values | Privacy, identity and data protection

Setting the challenge

Social responsibility in STEM expands to all professions, which must work to establish trust

Professor Rajkumar Roy
Executive Dean, School of Science and Technology, and social responsibility lead at City, University of London

The work of this symposium reveals the size of the challenge to improve how professions give back to society. In 2021, the perception of honesty and ethics in the leading professions reached new low scores. The UK is below the OECD average for social mobility. There is much work to do.

This event series is designed to look at social responsibility (SR) across the disciplines and, from 2023, we have expanded to include all professions.

Several universities in the UK and globally – Manchester, City, Harvard, among others – are heavily involved in this agenda. As a national forum it is important to focus on strategic issues where we should work together.

The IPSOS survey of confidence in the future and trust shows optimism in society that next year will be better than this current year, which has fallen to 65% from 77%, a sentiment reflected by the students and staff at City University.
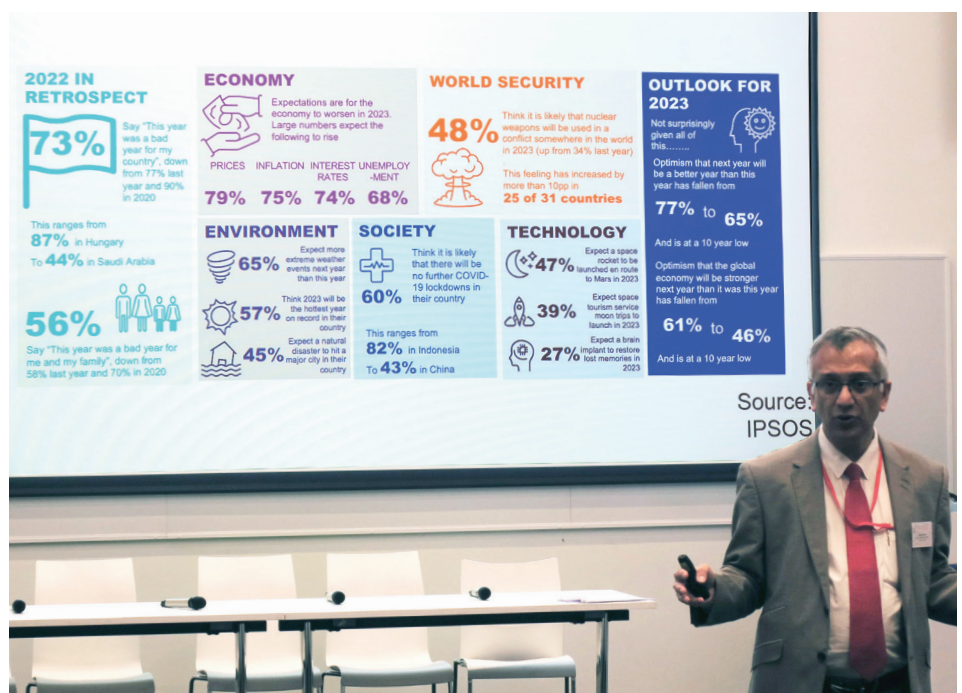
A chart showed trust in the professions. Doctors, then scientists, teachers, and the armed forces are the most trustworthy.

Journalists and bankers score low. In the US nurses are number one. Trust levels are falling; even teachers and armed forces' trustworthiness fell in the US, possibly due to the covid pandemic.

What does this tell higher education? Our students might become a lawyer or a banker, so City University has a trust issue to address. It is one thing to teach ethics, another to practice it. Trust must be earned.

Ethics: can ethics keep up with technology?

McKinsey's latest **report** on 22 technology trends includes applied AI, future of clean energy, mobility, quantum tech, advanced connectivities are these are moving up in scope and importance.

Fact: USA – CHANGING TRUST ON PROFESSIONS

Professions at New Lows in Honesty and Ethics Ratings in 2021

% Very high/High honesty and ethical standards

— Grade-school teachers — Military officers - - Judges ···· Clergy - - TV reporters

Clergy measured most years since 1977; the other four occupations measured intermittently

GALLUP
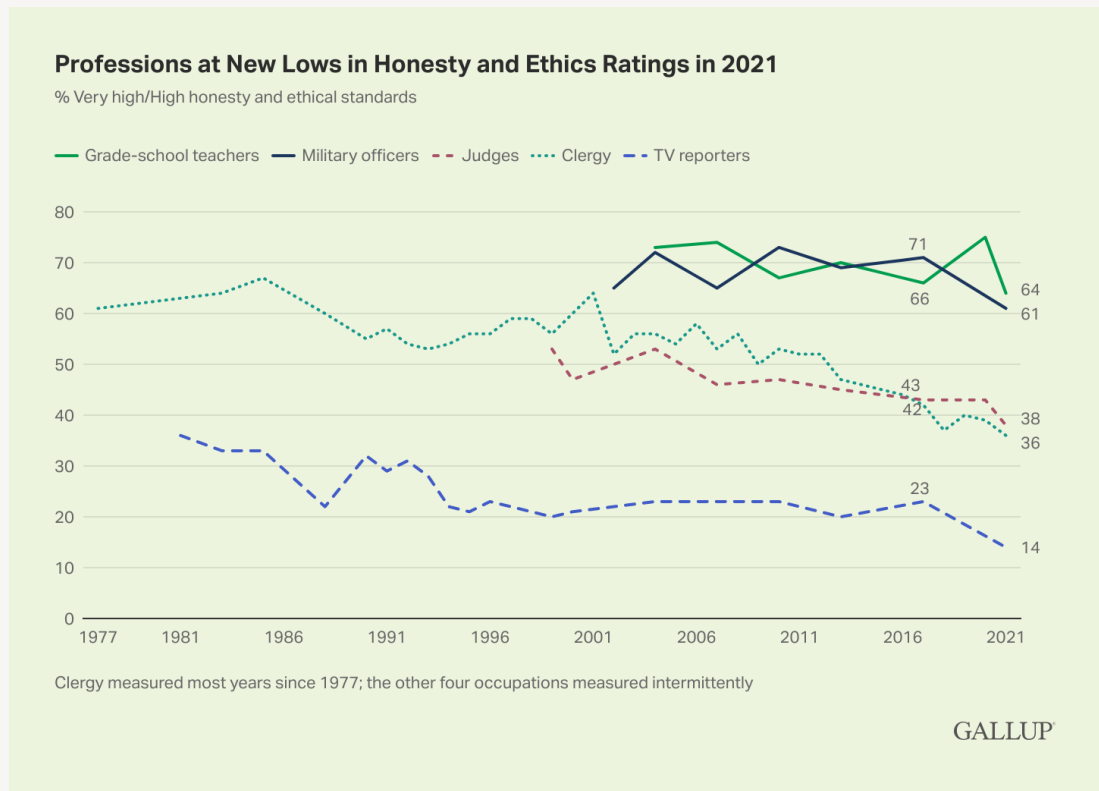
With this technology brings new ethical challenges. Professor Victoria Baines will talk about metaverse and ethics. The question is: can we keep up with this change? Can we identify the ethical issues that arise in using this technology?

The risk is we catch this after the technology is developed – especially in computer science. In engineering we can pre-empt the changes earlier.

The CIPD are asking their members to follow professional conduct involving ethics. There is a strong debate among practitioners, about morals versus ethics and where the boundaries lie.

Dr Claudia Eckert at the Open University and City, University of London are studying how to embed ethics in the engineering design process, not as an afterthought, regardless of the product.

Challenges

CSR was once popular, and now ESG has risen higher. In reality, all these metrics are difficult to measure and require a lot of work, time and research. SMEs do not have these resources, and they ask is it worth their while?

The **Worshipful Company of IT** and City are working to help SMEs embed ESG in their business with a code or method they can apply practically.

There are too may ESG standards and they don't all apply to SMEs.

Net zero for an enterprise is not enough, we must quantify net zero of the whole supply chain. We can analyse through-life engineering and operations, but we rarely talk about the lifecycle impact of products –the carbon footprint of buildings and products in their entire lifetime. This should be the focus.

Social mobility

The UK is below the OECD average for social mobility. The government is placing a bigger focus now on social mobility outlined in the **Social Value Act**.

The universities of Manchester and City are good exponent of driving social mobility from the HE sector.

For enterprises, SR means looking after your own employees and their welfare, and to help the community outside the

company. That is the fundamental reason that we need to challenge the "why do we need it?" view.

Now is the time to look at how different professions can share practices and help each others' efforts to improve SR. STEM professionals are the community and we have to respond to this.

Find out more

Metaverse ethics

Professor Victoria Baines
Professor of IT, Gresham College

WCIT Information Security Panel (Chair)

Victoria Baines discussed ethics in the metaverse, the growing world that provides an iteration of the Internet as a single and immersive virtual world that is facilitated by the use of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technology.

Professor Baines is a leading authority in the field of online trust, safety and cybersecurity. She frequently contributes to major broadcast media outlets on digital ethics, cybercrime and the misuse of emerging technologies, including Extended Reality and Artificial Intelligence.

Earlier in her career, she was the Principal Analyst for the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre at the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA), the predecessor of the National Crime Agency. Some of the work she was involved with examined emerging trends in online child safety.

At this time, RuneScape, a multi-player online role-playing game, was a very popular game. The work of this specialist centre at SOCA showed that children were being groomed to take part in illegal activities. Professor Baines opened an account in RuneScape, she built a farm, farmed produce and raised chickens. One day, she – or rather her RuneScape alter ego – accidentally kicked a chicken, which flew through the air. The main observation was that her character was able to commit a notionally violent act, and the chicken character responded to her act in a dynamic, evasive way. Professor Baines, as her alter-persona, spent considerable time in RuneScape, studying and observing the interactions with other characters. Her experience led to an important report on recommendations for online child protection.

The experience showed Professor Baines and colleagues at the centre that, in the metaverse, participants can do both good and bad things to other participants and they can engage in inappropriate behaviour.

A component of the Online Safety Bill that has been agreed is that certain actions that are illegal offline, in the real world, should be illegal online. For example, the Bill has a list of illegal content that platforms need to remove. In the metaverse, using augmented reality (AR) technology, the definition of these acts and how they are treated and policed becomes complicated because we are blending a physical environment with a data-only world.

The lecture at City, University of London discussed the realism of these games, these parallel worlds, and the blurred lines between reality and fantasy that rules and laws now need to legislate for.

Humans have a long-standing quest for immersion in alternate realities, dating back thousands of years. People now find themselves in these environments daily; this is not a future state but it is happening now. Those who have a persona in online games such as the battle and survival game Fortnite know that what happens to their character in these immersive environments feels very real.

Part of this field of online trust and safety is also about co-presence. People have been interacting online with others as avatars – a digital representation of themselves – for over 20-years. And it has had huge social and economic value. Engaging the online world, and our digital personae, is how we have built personal and professional communities during the covid pandemic, on platforms such as Zoom and MS Teams, which have become indispensable. Now, to take this evolution further, AV, VR and MR (mixed reality) allow people to feel that they are physically living in that space.

Warfare games have reportedly been used by terrorist organisations to train people to kill their enemies. Naturally, this does not mean that everyone who plays the game will be radicalised.

Some players have reported that the game makes them feel more like they are in a war zone, it can even simulate PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and makes them think about how they would harm other people. Student think tank The Security Distillery reports on terrorists' use of the internet and the metaverse. An article on their website in April 2022 says, "the possibility of virtually building potential targets and practicing different attack scenarios will likely increase the odds of terrorists conducting successful attacks."[1]

How is crime in the metaverse measured and punished?

The legality of acts committed in the metaverse is a growing area of online safety and ethics.

If the virtual abuse of someone's digital avatar is outlawed, it follows that killing someone in an online game must also be illegal. Today, many people regularly kill other people – their real avatars – in online spaces. The gaming industry, online safety practitioners, and lawyers must look at the ethics of this further. A framework is needed to define what is acceptable and what should be outlawed.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2022, the United Arab Emirates' minister of state for artificial intelligence said that new laws should be created to prevent people from committing crimes such as "murder" in the metaverse[2]. Practitioners should ask if this must be set out in legislation like the Online Safety Bill. And if not, how can we, or the law, say that it is OK to murder someone in the metaverse but it is a crime in real life, when they are already immersed in the metaverse?

Another area that shows that users are sensitive to behaviours in the metaverse is how personal space is respected.

A sign that some of the metaverse's biggest developers are concerned about this is the development of "force fields" for avatars. Meta, the company that owns Facebook, is concerned about participants who encroach on another's personal space, so a visible force field can be activated to indicate to all parties the avatar's personal space.

Trust and trustworthiness

People can own and operate multiple online personae – for example, in Teams, Zoom, LinkedIn, and online game avatars. These profiles do not always reflect the person's real appearance. This "impersonation" raises questions about trust and authenticity, especially to gain access to private and confidential data, such as financial and tax information. The metaverse is being used increasingly as a utility, just like people use the internet. The online industry needs to work out how we authenticate ourselves in these spaces, and what our avatars are permitted to do, and not do, in this environment.

Virtual personae can now look so life-like that an avatar or virtual character could be trusted, for example to access personal data based on minimal security checks. Such trusted avatars could access privileged areas of a business.

Gaming is the leading area of metaverse development. A very big point of these games is that the person has two lives: their real selves and their avatar/digital selves. How do we distinguish that in some spaces you have to be your *true self*, and in other spaces it is perfectly fine to be the warrior prince, the fantasy cat, or the dinosaur, where you can abuse or mistreat other characters freely?

Security considerations

The Edelman Trust Barometer (2022) shows that trust in social media companies is very low[3].

Targeted advertising that taps into people's profiles, preferences and "Likes", to persuade people to make purchases online, is now a common practice. But there is also a lack of transparency around both collecting personal data and the legitimate use of that data.

The increasing realism of the metaverse can enhance some of these challenges, not least because the technology can now capture a person's actions, behaviour and emotional state. Games developers could be eye-tracking your emotional state – lawyers might claim that this is medically-sensitive data.

There are many areas of online trust, safety, security and ethics in the metaverse that industries and professionals need to discuss, challenge and legislate for, because the metaverse is only going to get bigger and more complex.

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1 https://thesecuritydistillery.org/all-articles/terrorism-and-the-metaverse-new-opportunities-and-new-challenges

2 https://www.cnbc.com/2022/05/25/metaverse-murders-need-to-be-policed-says-uae-tech-minister.html

3. https://www.edelman.com/trust/2023/trust-barometer

Find out more

How our view of value shapes our ethical decisions

Andrew Baughen
Chaplain and Visiting Lecturer at Bayes Business School

Andrew discussed three measures of value that shape our decision making in ethics: the value of purpose, the value of humanity and the value of lasting impact.

Imagine you are taken into a large room with a high vaulted ceiling, and it is pitch black apart from one spotlight that is shining on a beautiful jewel.

What is your impression of the room and where is your focus? It is solely on the jewel.

Then, lights come on from every angle filling the room with brightness and clarity. What you then see is that the room is full of sparkling jewels, many much bigger and more radiant than the jewel. Where is your focus now? It's on many jewels, each with their own merits.

Our view of value depends on the light we see by and the perspective it gives.

The ethics of a responsible professional start by switching on the lights so we can see all the value, purpose and priorities of work. In the markets dominated room, the focus of value is often on one jewel alone – money. But we know it's not all that matters. It's when we switch on the lights that we see beyond a pile of cash to a whole world of treasures and the precious value of people.

The ethics we live by is linked to the treasures we seek. As human beings we act from mind but also heart and soul. Ethics therefore comes from the connection of what we process in our minds and what we desire deep within. The problem comes when our desires are focused exclusively on one thing to the detriment of other things of equal or greater value.

To return to the room of jewels, the issue is that there is a room full of jewels we were made to enjoy and yet we can only see one or two and are expecting those few to meet all our needs. It's one of the principles I've taught for years to couples preparing for marriage – if you expect your spouse to meet every need then you are putting an expectation on them that they can never deliver and it will lead to disappointment which we lead to blame which we leaf to distance rather than intimacy.

My favourite title for a book on marriage is 'What did you expect?'

Seeing the full array of value that we can both enjoy from work and generate in work enables us to thrive as ethical professionals with clear and complete expectations.

This approach to ethical decisions could be called the Bayesian approach as it shares the principles Thomas Bayes, the theologian and statistician, set out in his pamphlet titled 'Divine Benevolence' published in 1731. He begins with the following:

There cannot be a controversy of greater importance than that which relates to the divine perfections. On our right apprehensions of these, religion entirely depends; on these, all our hopes of happiness are entirely built. For unless we know what God is, and entertain clear conceptions of his perfections, and particularly of his moral attributes, we shall neither know how to behave towards him, nor what we are to expect from him according as we do behave.

His point is that the more we see divine benevolence, and specifically goodness, justice and truth, the more we can live fully confident that goodness, justice and truth are the true realities that bring joy. It's a positive enquiry approach to ethics which believes that ethical absolutes are not just real but also life giving.

It's easy to view laws and regulations like we treat speed cameras, that we slow down for simply to avoid a fine. But the ethical professional sees regulations more as a safety rope – there to secure our happiness rather than spoil our fun.

Andrew Bester, who was Chief Executive, Commercial Bank, Lloyds Banking Group following the 2008 financial crisis describes 'the fog of financial innovation' that was created when financial services was deregulated in 1986 at what was called the Big Bang. He points to how sophistication and technical specialisation rather than the end client was seen as the route to success and he suggests that codifying ethics provides the 'glue' and 'guardrails' for business.[1]

The point is that we act according to what we value – the treasures of our hearts. The encouragement in this is that the conversation is changing from the 'greed-is-good' 1980s when I started my career as a strategy consultant in the financial services industry. The treasures of the heart are now widening from just making money to include making a difference.

There are three questions we can ask that widen our view of value and shape our ethical decisions.

Is it useful? The value of purpose.

Purpose is all the rage at the moment – but the ethical professional knows the difference between a good and a bad purpose. A bank robber has a purpose, which to him seems a good idea, though we wouldn't say it was good for society or an ethical way of making a living. Valuable purpose connects telos and ethos – where telos is the end point and ethos is the approach taken to get there. It ensures a decision is made not just on the economic gain but on the wider gain – it asks 'yes it may make lots of money but does it do any good?'

How do we prioritise choices? Just on money made or the difference achieved?

Knowing the value of purpose ensures economics don't supplant ethics. For example, severe pain has been widely recognised in recent times as a real problem and significant disability for many people. The treatment of pain with specialised opioid drugs has been proposed as a game changing solution. But the tipping point came when certain drug companies decided to push their pills to as many as possible for as long as possible in the biggest doses possible despite the addiction crisis and all the consequences of crime and broken lives that ensued.

The more I understand the telos of my work, the more I will understand the ethos with which to work. The more I learn my craft and the more I will delight in the good purposes that are hardwired into it. Ethical professionals act on purpose and produce what is useful.

Is it serving people? The value of humanity.

There has been an interesting debate recently about the statement of many organisations to be all about people. The dissonance occurs when a firm famed for creating beautiful products full of human

centric design has an internal culture that is siloed and toxic. In my research I often here staff ask – 'how can we value our customers when we're not being valued as team members?' It's a cry from the heart – staff aren't saying that they don't care about customers or think the servers are more important than those served, but more fundamentally, we're all people, we're all valuable, we all need to receive.

The ethical professional sees the value of people – they know value and share that by valuing others. We act towards people depending on how much we value them. For example:

Bob Chapman, a successful CEO of a multinational company, was sitting in the congregation of a wedding ceremony watching a father walk his daughter down the aisle. He was thinking to himself how he knew exactly what that father was thinking as he approached the groom waiting to greet his bride. The father was thinking how much he loved his daughter and wanted the best for her and how much he was expecting her husband to see, feel and act with the same love and concern for her thriving and wellbeing. Then the epiphany came as he realised that's the same for every member of his team – they are all somebody's precious child and he has been given the responsibility to care for them. Seeing the value of people as someone's precious child changed how he viewed people and the responsibilities of his CEO role.[2]

How do you see people? Research shows that the most powerful way you can improve the mental health of someone at work is to take time to talk to them and find out about their world and feelings about the world. When did you last talk to people and how much are you known by other people?

Will it have lasting impact? The value of legacy.

What is the sum of your individual wealth? We talk about people being high net worth individuals or even as UHNWs – ultra high net worth individuals. But is our worth in what we own or in the impact we make?

One of my favourite questions to ask when I'm doing my value mapping workshops is this:

On your deathbed, what aspects of the whole value you've generated will you look back on and say "that was definitely worth all the effort"?

Our lasting worth is in the lives we influence, the transformation we enable, the futures we invest in. You can be the

wealthiest and poorest at the same time. Countless riches but a life that counts for nothing. But it doesn't have to be that way and the solution is in how you view impact. Every professional is in the impact business – you may not be nominated as a B Corp or an impact investment, but professionals see their responsibility to leave a legacy for stakeholders and society.

One of the saddest moments when I was a strategy consultant was a discussion with the leadership team of a building society. We'd just completed our report in which we'd highlighted the amazing strengths they had as a network of local branches in a specific UK region. They were well known and trusted by generations of savers and mortgage holders. But with deregulation there was an opportunity to demutualise and sell to a bank who was basically interested in securitising their loan portfolio. There was a choice – continue the hard work of building a great business with the long-term gain of helping people buy homes or take the short-term gain of a windfall.

Ethical professionals focus on long term social impact, not short-term cash injection.

It's about moral character not just technical competency. Ethical decisions come from a set of virtues and beliefs that see what is truly valuable.

Virtues give a professional the integrity of being the same on the inside and outside – having an inner strength that shapes how we act, speak and treat others. Just like a building has structural integrity that can weather the storms, leading an integrated life built on virtues gives us confidence to make decisions made of the same material.

I saw a brilliant production of A Christmas Carol at the Old Vic. The audience were united in the joy of Dickens' story – the tale of Ebeneezer Scrooge who had more money than he could ever need but had none of the love that can satisfy our deepest of needs. The redemptive turn comes with a choice he makes on one Christmas night – a decision that looks to others rather than himself and is changed by the kindness of others. We all need those epiphany moments when we recalibrate what really matters and act with virtues that make a difference.

[1] Bester, A. (2016) Financial Services – reflections on leadership in a post financial crisis world Dean's Lecture Cass Business School 9 March 2016

[2] From Valued. Finding Meaningful Value in your Everyday Work by Andrew Baughen (due to be published in 2023)

Panel debate 1
Ethics in different professions – Undergraduate and Postgraduate curriculum requirements

Andrew Vautier, Senior Managing Director at Accenture, chaired the panel of: Dr Jonathan Truslove, Education and Skills Lead at EWB, Professor Felician Campean Associate Dean – Research & Innovation, University of Bradford, Professor Sanowar Khan, Prof of Instrumentation and Sensors at City, and Professor Victoria Baines, Andrew Baughen and Professor Stephen O'Connor from

the morning speakers.

Engineering Without Borders (EWB) and City are in the second year of a strategic partnership. Dr Jonathan Truslove, Education and Skills Lead at EWB explained its strategy.

"For a sector that employs 5.7 million people in the UK alone, we continue to have a surprising lack of clarity around our commitments to people and planet."

The strategy builds towards the 2030 deadline for the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It has four key principles of a SR engineer. They should be:

- **Responsible.** To meet the needs of all people within the limits of our planet. This should be at the heart of engineering.

- **Purposeful.** To consider all the impacts of engineering, from a project or product's inception to the end of its life. This should be at a global and local scale, for people and planet.

- **Inclusive.** To ensure that diverse viewpoints and knowledge are included and respected in the engineering process.

- **Regenerative.** To actively restore and regenerate ecological systems, rather than just reducing impact.

The engineering community has had a significant impact on "getting the planet where it is today", both good and bad. Engineering innovations help reduce carbon emissions across industry and contributes to our daily lives. On the negative, the construction sector alone accounts for 38% of global emissions. No country is on track to reach all 17 UK Sustainable Goals and engineering is not doing enough.

Professor Felician Campean, involved in research and innovation at the University of Bradford for 34 years. Felician, with Raj Roy, is interested in how we update university courses to integrate the ethical and social responsibility issues. In autonomous systems, the designer will have responsibility for the behaviour of the system, which is a change in perspective. He said there are two problems for engineering:

1. From an engineering systems point of view, how do we update model-based systems engineering, the tools and tool changes, and the thinking, such that ethics and SR are driven through the design process?

2. In education how do we create meaningful and realistic experiences for students to engage with ethical issues?

Felician has a project with Bradford Council, to pedestrianize the city centre and use autonomous shuttles. His students are identifying use cases and requirements – not about safety, but everything from public health, safety, cost, trust, responsibility. The student cohort is engineering, medical and automotive.

Professor Sanowar Khan, Prof of Instrumentation and Sensors at City said when he studied engineering, competence was super-important but ethics and SR were not taught. But increasingly it's everywhere. The equipment for mining conflict diamonds creates a major ethical issue. Artificial intelligence. The medical ethics of faulty implants – are all engineering problems that must be tackled before the design, at the conceptual stage.

Now at City, all first and second year engineering students do the same SR and ethics module. In all computer science degrees, ethics is a first year module.

Q1. Every profession has some ethical challenges. Is there any common ethical challenge across the professions?

Andrew Baughen/AB: Human selfishness is the common challenge. Some would say sin.

In the sermon on the mound, Jesus said the 10 Commandments, which was the law, was much wider than the list of ten. If you murder someone by calling them rancorous you have murdered their reputation.

Andrew Vautier referred to the "trust framework" that Raj Roy has worked on; we

try to avoid selfishness and try to gain trust.

AB: Integrity is the best word: it applies to engineering (buildings) and values. When the storms come, you and the building will stand up to the challenge.

Stephen O'Connor/SB: The key words across all the professions are honesty, truthfulness and protective. Protective for me means to do no wrong.

Victoria Baines/VB: Resistance to change, and resistance to challenge, to take in all points of view. Group think and homogeneity – all common ethical challenges.

Q2: Policy makers implement the SR and ethics but they are not engineers

While engineers are expected to make a commitment to social responsibility and ethical decision-making, **what does the panel feel is necessary to better equip engineers to address the social and behavioural risks of the "systems" in which their technologies will be exploited?**

Jonathan Truslove/JT: We should recognise we don't live in siloes. Engineers teaching engineering to engineers how to practise engineering in a bubble does not reflect the real world. EWB created a doughnut model: the inner circle was the social foundation for humanity needs inc. health, heat and energy, while the outer circle is pollution, ocean acidification, nitrogen levels and rising sea levels in an inclusive society. That doesn't happen in a silo, but when we interact with each other.

Software is replacing the human element of engineering; it can produce a design that

works, but we need to ask not how we do / make this but should we do this? Engineers need to foster a mindset of "what are we doing?" and thinking of the wider context.

Rishi Sunak's plan to make all students learn maths up to age 18 – to do this you must show the application of these calculations can help people and save lives.

That's what our Engineering Design Challenge does. A responsibility to people and planet needs to be captured more in our undergraduate education.

Sanowar Khan/SK: The UK has excellent engineering heritage, it's the birthplace of many new technologies. But it's also the only country where the engineering profession is not protected. Anybody can call themselves an engineer, a boiler fitter or mechanic. Also, very few CEOs of industrial companies who are trained engineers or even STEM graduates. Both are different in France and Germany. Therefore, the head of the company thinks like an engineer and about the product's suitability and flaws in its application, and has more responsibility for it.

Q3: Should we educate students about morals or ethics or both?

AB: I'd say that morals are more about your values and your world view, and ethics is about principles that people practise. It comes back to speed cameras. Do you keep to the speed limit, or when outside the camera view, ignore it? A speed awareness course changed my view of driving because it showed you the damage you can cause to people's lives. We need to teach people

to think in a moral way (attitude to speed), then they will treat ethics (speed camera) as a good thing rather than avoid it.

SOC: The medical malpractice cases are examples of both. I only know one medical tech company where the CEO is a trained engineer, in Germany. However, it's still one that went into default. Professional trainees need to be given a view of how society expects them to behave. Under the Engineering Council and being chartered, there are strong values that you must follow. It is very unfortunate that in the UK the word "Engineer" is not an official title. In Europe if you say you're an engineer, they really respect you and your expertise.

VB: I hope that by the time students get to university they have a real grounding in morals and ethics from school and parents. It's not solely universities' responsibility.

Felician Campean/FC: I spent a lot of time teaching design to engineering students about Elon Musk. An example is the plan to put many satellites into space, but there is no plan showing how to bring them back. We need to do more in teaching engineers to emphasis whether you should do something, and the reasons for this.

Find out more

Embedding social responsibility in higher education

Professor Nalin Thakkar
Vice-President of The University of Manchester

The University of Manchester is investing heavily in social and environmental responsibility at many levels across the organisation. It wants to be recognised as a leading university that is leading in connecting its work to social value in its host city, Greater Manchester, and to SR global initiatives.

Professor Nalin Thakkar focussed on four broad areas. Firstly, why social responsibility (SR) is important to the university ('Purpose'), who is tasked to deliver this ('People'), what are the key areas of focus and how does the university translate it into operations ('Programs'), and how do they know that these actions are effective ('Performance'). There is also a comment on student experience.

Making social responsibility (SR) effective and meaningful in higher education

SR in a higher education setting is only effective if it permeates through everything a university does and believes in.

It does not work if it's seen as 'profitable' gimmick or in isolation in some areas or through some initiative but the university acts in a socially irresponsible way otherwise.

Purpose

Professor Thakkar said: "'What is a university for?'" Looking back at the University of Manchester's proud and rich history, it excels in both research and innovation, and in teaching and learning. But that is what they or we do; it does not answer the question of *why* they do it. As the UK's first civic university, the university was created to benefit the people of Manchester and the region. This is the answer to the question "what is their purpose?". Now as a major global institution, it sees that its purpose is to benefit society, locally, nationally and globally."

In 2011, the university made social responsibility a core institutional goal, equal to both research & innovation, and teaching & learning, which is unique among universities in the UK. This purpose is also embedded in the institution's vision and values.

People

The University of Manchester believes that leadership at the highest level is important in driving and embedding SR through the university. The current vice-chancellor initiated the SR program and invested resources to support it by creating a senior executive post (VP) as well as a senior professional services post (director).

Importantly this program involves all the university's staff, (academic and professional services), all the students and also the alumni. It also involves local communities, and partnerships within the city, regionally, nationally and globally.

Programs

University of Manchester's SR strategy has five themes: Social Inclusion, Prosperous Communities, Better Health, Environmental Sustainability and Cultural Engagement.

It operationalises these through everything it does: research & innovation, teaching & learning, operations and public engagement.

Professor Thakkar described examples of what happens under each theme. For example, under their Social Inclusion theme, there are two institutions addressing global poverty and humanitarian and conflict response. University staff and alumni provide the largest number of volunteer school governors in the UK, and these volunteers disseminate knowledge through public engagement programs. This work is embedded in public involvement in research programs, and there is a program to increase the number of people with protected characteristics at a leadership level.

Performance

Of the university's eight KPIs, two relate to SR: the impact on society and "Zero Carbon Campus".

They measure the impact on society through external objective measures. These KPIs achieved two notable rankings:

1. Top 2% universities in global performance ranking on meeting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

Manchester is one of the two universities globally that has been rated consistently in the top 10 since the inception of the index.

2. Top decile in the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) public engagement. It achieved this target in the last KEF exercise.

Student Experience

Students engage directly with the SR agenda at the university, including their Stellify, service learning and university Living Lab programs.

The most important factor in students' experience and learning, they reported, was being part of an organisation where SR was truly embedded and part of the fabric of everything that happened at university.

Prof Thakkar concluded that what drives the University of Manchester is asking itself not just what it is good at, but what it is good for.

Find out more

We shouldn't always do it just because it is technically possible

Professor Andy Phippen
Professor of Digital Rights, Bournemouth University

Professor Phippen's work has moved increasingly into IT ethics and studying the online harm of children. It now covers technology law, society and politics. Andy works for the British Computer Society (BCS) as both a chartered member and fellow and teaches IT ethics to computer scientists across the UK.

His presentation discussed the many flaws with expecting technology alone to solve the issues of child online safety and privacy.

A few years ago, the UK government decided it wanted to make the UK the safest place to go online. It launched the Online Safety Bill, drafted in May 2021.

Politicians from all parties demand that "because it happens online, technology can solve it".

and the approach is to shout at tech companies more loudly if child safety is compromised.

One pattern is that when people use this tech in their daily lives, they seem to award themselves a greater claim to its ethics and legal practice, without having any knowledge of the legality. This is partly a failure of the IT industry, which is routinely accused of overpromising and under-delivering.

The unwillingness of leaders above the IT managers to accept there might be system flaws is appalling.

The Cambridge Analytica (CA) scandal was the trigger point for society deciding that "technology is bad" and needs better regulation, illustrated in Christopher Wylie's book "Mindf*ck". Before CA you could issue fines for breaches. CA showed that data could influence societies and democracy.

Computer academics fail by not engaging enough with the history of IT and reflecting on it.

To ask students to reflect on their studies, a favourite question in IT ethics is:

"Would you take a commercial flight knowing that you were the sole technical authority that signed off its flight control systems?"

Almost all students answer no – the only conclusion being that we are not teaching ethics well enough.

> "How well are universities covering ethics in computer science and IT degrees?"

Online harm

This attitude is quite normal today: "We are doing this regulatory work to protect children. If you don't agree with us and help us, you want children to be harmed".

There is a constant media narrative about harm coming to children online. A favourite statistic is that NSPCC says *Child grooming has increased 70% in the last four years.*

That is true. But five years ago, there was no child grooming law, i.e. sexual communication with a child was not an illegal act until 2017. So of course we would expect there to be an increase in prosecutions.

A more responsible headline would be: "New grooming laws are working" but reassurance doesn't sell newspapers.

The area where technology data, privacy and crime prevention meet is very problematic.

Reassurance and dangerous algorithms

A strapline by an IT company suggested that if you buy this (data tracking software) product your child will be safe: you can see your child's location, interactions and data and so they will be safe. Nobody ever challenged whether this was bad. It's a safeguarding dystopia.

The European Convention of Human Rights applies to children and young people. Ratification of the ECHR was agreed by the UK in 1989, it protects children's privacy

online. But still people believe there is a technological, not an ethical or best practice, solution to safeguarding.

The routine tracking of people to check they are safe is ethically confusing.

1) it's an invasion of privacy and 2) the technology only reveals the device, not the person's, location. The tech sector must be careful what safety claims it makes, or it will be called out on it, without addressing the social challenges and nuances in that situation.

Where does overconfidence in the tech sector's ability to protect children lead to?

Everyone mentions the algorithm.

A national body that represents youth safety said these algorithms are "dangerous". Nadine Dorries, when Culture and Media Secretary in 2021, famously asked Microsoft to stop using algorithms as it might harm young people. Such companies exist because of algorithms.

Many ordinary people are using "tech speak" with no understanding of their meaning.

An algorithm was produced in the covid pandemic to normalise exams results with some moderation depending on the location. Boris Johnson two years ago addressed this and said it was a "mutant algorithm".

> "Algorithms cannot go rogue; they can only do what they are told to do."

AI

Artificial intelligence is getting more and more impressive. But it is not "magic". In one example, people of colour uploaded their photos to a photo-correcting service and were told the photos were incorrect because their mouths were open. The claim was that the algorithm was racist. There were not enough people of colour in the training data.

AI is a fantastically powerful tool but it cannot do the same things as a human. The book "Weapons of Math Destruction" by Cathy O'Neill talks about societal impact of algorithms, and building IT with the right

training data. Again, tech gets accused of not doing enough and therefore *supporting the harm of children*.

Importance of context

Plymouth Hoe is a real place – mention it on Facebook you get a warning for cyber bullying. The level of false positive is still challenging in a large production system, so companies fall back on what they can do which is keep word-matching as similar.

A few years ago, then Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt, gave evidence to committee for children's mental health and online harm. He said that tech companies can prevent a minor taking an image of themself and sending it.

The problems here to unpick:

– How is it sent?

– Does the ISP or the mobile network, or the platform provider have the responsibility?

– How do we know the person sending the image is below 18?

The Online Safety Bill (OSB)

The draft bill was published in May 2021 and has been strengthened and clarified since then.

The Bill introduces new rules for firms that host user-generated content, i.e., those which allow users to post their own content online or interact with each other, and for search engines, which will have tailored duties focussed on minimising the presentation of harmful search results to users.

Under the Bill those platforms which fail to protect people will need to answer to the regulator, and could face fines of up to 10% of their revenues or, in the most serious cases, being blocked.

The OSB:

1. Is almost entirely focussed on a *platform's liability*, whereas we know multi-stakeholder approaches are more effective.

2. Focusses on prohibition, which is an unrealisable utopian goal. For example: "We're going to stop young people accessing porn with age verification". Good luck with that. We know from other failed prohibitive policies (drugs being a

'A-levels and GCSEs: Boris Johnson blames 'mutant algorithm' for exam fiasco'

Sean Coughlan – BBC News

good example) that risk mitigation and harm reduction are more effective.

3. It's not all bad news though. The transparency reporting (where platforms talk about take downs, what they do with reports, etc) is a useful tool to convince end-users that using the reporting tools is worthwhile and will lead to positive outcomes.
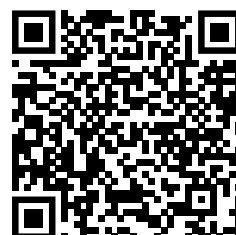
The main problem with the OSB is the people debating it don't understand how tech works, and make seriously off the mark assumptions.

The two books listed above, Mindf*ck and Weapons of Math Destruction

OSB debate in Parliament on Hansard, especially comments of Mariam Cates

https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-12-05/debates/E155684B-DEB0-43B4-BC76-BF53FEE8086A/OnlineSafetyBill

Find out more

Medical Ethics

Professor Stephen O'Connor
Royal Academy of Engineering
Visiting Professor at City, University of London; Fellow of IPEM

Professor O'Connor presented a remarkable series of cases where medical professionals and pharmaceutical & medical companies had misappropriated their status and reputation to deceive colleagues and con money and fees from innocent parties.

Purchasing decisions in medicine should be made in the best interests of the patient and not in the financial interests of decision makers who take bribes.

Case One

Manufacturers of implantable defibrillators made false claims to public healthcare programmes in violation of the US False Claims Act (FCA). It agreed to pay $2.7 million to resolve allegations of bribery.

Between 2014 and 2016 the same company knowingly sold defective implants – lifesaving devices – with a premature battery life issue. The malfunction in fact caused death.

It failed to disclose its knowledge about premature battery depletion. 729 meds and two deaths. The battery was recalled in 2016, but what did company 1 know about the defect and when?

Class action lawsuit was taken out by insurers of the patient, and the harm added to the insurers' procedure costs and revision costs – a repair operation.

The company was found to be aware of the battery defects between 2011 and 2014, with 42 analysis reports that confirmed it.

Outcome:

- Basic corporate malfeasance

- Failure to report product issues to the board and management

- Failure to report these issues to the FDA and authorities

- Post-recall there was also a lack of vigilance. Ten devices were released from warehouse and used in patients despite knowing that they were defective.

2021 FDA passed judgement and a fine of £27 million. Small in comparison to the company's turnover.

Case Two

Implantable defibrillators due to failed insulation caused seven known deaths and three deaths *after the recall*.

The company failed to properly warn patients of these issues. Earlier deaths may have gone unnoticed because once a patient dies the defibrillators are not always removed and examined for functionality. The company failed to properly warn patients of these issues.

The New York Times broke the story. The whistle-blower who told the NYT was a very senior executive. The company received a very small fine in relation to their turnover.

Case Three

In 2022 a European multinational company settled claims for improper payments to physicians under the US False Claims Act.

False claims were submitted to insurers and they bribed physicians. It was fined $12.95m.

Three years earlier the company was fined $4.9m. The fines are not deterring bribery.

More fines will follow from other countries.

Case Four

A European sales and marketing company of surgical equipment, instruments and devices conducted unethical business practices:

- Senior hospital staff who dealt with the company received expensive gifts and holidays

- Released commercially sensitive information about competitors including price lists

- Failed to keep proper accounts

- Overcharged healthcare system

- Attempted to hide assets when tax bill was due.

Employability and social responsibility at the best universities

Dr Manny Contomanolis
Director of Career Services at Harvard University

Employability has a tremendous array of variables and factors. All the stakeholders in higher education effect what and where a student studies. The effect of social responsibility in a career or job is growing, especially at Harvard, says Dr Contomanolis.

Harvard University has a long history of developing leaders, attracting students and professors with strong ethical and socially responsible beliefs.

In higher education there are three dimensions that are particularly important:

1. Preparation for a life of social responsibility – the ethical foundations, values and practices that allow them to contribute positively to society.

2. Social responsibility as a career pathway. At Harvard and other universities, there is more interest in graduates to enter fields that practice & support social responsibility. We must support them.

3. Seek opportunities to do things outside work that supports society, such as voluntary work. We are now assessing the lifetime contribution of some graduates on society, rather than the first part of their careers.

There are some trends for acquiring talent developing across all industries and government. One is that the strengths and skills of graduates are now seen as more important than the schools they attended.

Harvard engineering graduates tend to not enter engineering jobs on graduating, but go into finance, consulting, and careers that require quantitative skills. This makes employment increasingly fluid i.e., education is becoming less specific to a career pathway. This is important because it opens up SR metrics – like equality, diversity and inclusion – into a wider pool of careers than before.

CSR – in the US there is a strong focus on organisations supporting environmental concerns. There are ethical, economic and philanthropic dimensions to CSR that are being examined in the US.

Potential strategies in the US and Rest of the World:

1. Learning objectives that consider the ESG and SR objectives mentioned. This needs to be present at the course, faculty and institution level. We see more efforts to assess the impact of higher education, and this gives us the opportunity to embed these SR objectives in every individual course. Developing graduates with a strong sense of SR.

2. Increasingly, certificates and badging have become important, especially the baccalaureate level. We see the undergraduate level employers that value this notion of additional SR preparation beyond a degree. Activities, programmes, short course that lead to certificates are sought after.

3. Distinctly within the US higher education community, investment in student services providing a rich and complex student experience. Extra-curricular clubs and activities are an area of competition among US universities. There are now more of these that provide a very wide array of SR work.

4. The most impactful one: Experiential or work-integrated learning is the biggest opportunity to link academic learning with social responsibility. Having world class professors and well-equipped labs are no longer enough – we need to allow students to apply their learning to real-life settings as a standard part of their course. Internships and cooperative education programmes are well established but also, the new growth in project-based learning and sponsored capstones as seniors (not clear). This involves company projects data and real problems provided by partner organisations. More professors are now using real-business scenarios and projects to build into their courses.

How do we introduce this learning through the curriculum?

Many of the projects, such as internships and capstones institutions are very focused on SR concerns, especially renewable energy, sustainability, environmental impact, remanufacturing, public policy, and fund raising for society causes.

The idea is to introduce to students early the value set of SR in the real world they will enter post-graduation and to test that through internships.

What makes these opportunities distinct is our ability as organisations to leverage our alumni and external partners to accelerate this process. The US is very good at this, for Ivy League and other university personnel to engage with companies and organisations outside their walls. For example, to help a local food bank project or to work with a renewable energy start-up.

ESG white paper: ESG guidance for SMEs

Julia George
Court Liveryman at the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists (WCIT)

The WCIT and City University has undertaken research into ESG in financial technology (fintech) and financial SMEs, under the WCIT's Financial Services Technology panel and its Social Value Leadership Group (SVLG) of companies. Three City masters student did the research as part of their thesis, with the aim of identifying issues faced by SMEs in responding to the ESG challenge, and identifying Rating Frameworks that are suitable.

Julia's talk focused on SMEs, climate change and ESG. Her three main challenges are:

1. If SMEs do not make the right decisions we will fail to hit Net Zero by 2050.

2. If STEM graduates do not cater for all stakeholders in their work, we will fail on Net Zero. Stakeholders include ethics and climate.

3. If we do not insist that our governments are innovative as well as accountable, we will fail to deliver Net Zero.

The WCIT has taken two main actions in the social responsibility in STEM agenda:

• Rob Wirszycz, WCIT Master convened a group of 12 technology companies, the majority of which are SMEs, asking them to look at the most difficult part of ESG – the social dimension, How do you develop capability to achieve outcomes that are good for society? The group, now lead by Professor Rajkumar Roy, produced the Social Value Capability Maturity Model (SVCM).

• WCIT commissioned the position paper with City to capture issues in ESG for financial services. The three STEM graduates met with, and interviewed, a panel of business leaders that the WCIT gathered for them. The panel represents the sort of organisations, that the graduates may well work for in future.

The background to the students' work is that many companies struggle to find ESG scoring frameworks applicable to them, and yet they have agreed to government targets of avg 68% reduction of GHG emissions by 2030 – a huge task. If this target is met, Net Zero is achievable.

The students reviewed 10 of the main ESG frameworks – there are about 600 globally - carrying out a comparison study between them, and recommending those they felt could contribute to developing real business capability in reaching the ESG goals, if employed. Finally, they compared the WCIT SVCM model against the best frameworks.

Highlights from student findings

Statistics and overall impact:

• ›90% of companies globally are SMEs

• 50% of employment globally is through SMEs

• Fintech is the UK's biggest start-up sector. It has more than 1,400 high growth active companies and 20 fintech "unicorns", plus they have attracted more venture capital than any other industry - nearly £22bn in equity to date, with one third in 2021 alone.

• FinTech SMEs are part of the "Fourth Industrial Revolution" of disruptive

digital transformation.

Fintech impact on the carbon footprint is a double edged sword – while increasing automation and speed, eliminating paper, and reducing admin on the plus side, it also increases data centres, hardware and technology, with a negative impact on its carbon footprint. Its opportunity though is to invest in new, renewable energy procurement, partner with other SMEs, use AI to accelerate this, and even reward "green" customers with benefits.

General comments from Students and SMEs on ESG:

- It costs about 4% of annual revenue to offset a company's carbon footprint, and the jury is still out on whether offsets alone can contribute to achieving Net Zero. Most SMEs cannot spare that proportion of their revenue.

- It is clear to SMEs that ESG is not CSR. ESG specifically addresses both governance and the environment, and is directed at businesses and investors. It also assumes tangible measures.

- 3,000 investors have signed up to the responsible investing principles, including "double materiality" issues, i.e., how investing impacts and risks the investors' own business model – the Fintech sector is aware of its need to respond.

- UK Government is developing statutory standards for Taskforce on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) aligned disclosures, as a precursor to new legislation – SMEs need to take action, sooner than later.

- The *Heart of the City* programme, in the City of London, is supporting SMEs to halve GHG emissions by 2030. City, University of London is part of that.

Negative aspects and challenges of ESG measurement:

– Data inconsistency: how companies report ESG, making it difficult to draw comparisons between companies.

– Benchmark selection: a fintech firm can be the top of its industry peer group, but score badly in its universal peer group – a problem for investors.

– Data imputation: two different imputed figures can deliver very different ESG performance ratings – not all models are fed equally.

– Reporting: firms are trying to convey their uniqueness, but they also have to be transparent and report against a common baseline – this is ever-more difficult with ESG.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

Positives include:

Work to ensure that ESG reporting is accorded the same importance as financial reporting, to consolidate standards, and to develop shareholder focused and industry specific disclosure standards. This should overcome the problem summarised by one of the students:

"A big problem with ESG reporting is that the disperse information is not comparable across all companies, nor is it especially pertinent. Businesses can just select the ESG framework that they would like to apply to their ESG report. When compiling their ESG reports, large companies frequently use a combination of different standards and frameworks. Companies report ESG metrics at different times of the year, using different reporting metrics, reporting boundaries, accounting methodologies, and reporting frameworks in their reports."

Students' conclusions

Of the 10 frameworks reviewed, some are more complex and specialised than others, for instance, GRI, IIRC and SASB seem more suitable for large corporations, as they require extensive and structured information to report SMES need a simplified, reporting framework, citing IRIS, B Impact Assessment and Future-Fit Assessment as helpful examples of easy-to-compute metrics. While "G", in ESG, needs attention by SMEs, there are approaches in use, dating back up to 40 years.

"E" is easy to measure, and uses industry benchmarks, but it's very difficult to verify.

"S" is the hardest to measure and where the gaps are greatest. "S" was assessed by social value and social sustainability

The WCIT SVCM model is clear and easy to adopt, uses metrics that are not too difficult or too intense to assess, and can be used as a precursor to more rigorous frameworks and assessment regimes that accredit businesses and hold them accountable to strict reporting and business standards.

SMEs, and corporates especially in the Finance industry need to develop capability.

STEM professionals need to develop a strategic, as well as a creative, mindset that understands the full breadth of stakeholders and relationships, including Government, Society and the Environment, and they need to look carefully at the complex relationship between COST, RISK and VALUE.

Government needs to educate Society on the real cost of achieving Net Zero by 2050, to put a price on carbon, to encourage markets to deliver.

Find out more

Panel debate 2:
Social responsibility and professional development
Chair: Rob Wirszycz, Master at the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists

This panel featured the afternoon speakers and Professor Mike Sutcliffe, newly appointed president of the Engineering Professors' Council.

Rob Wirszycz (RW) asked what do we have to do to convince organisations that SR is embedded in what they do? How do you deal with cynicism?

Nalin Thakkar (NT) said: We can only control what we can control, we just have to make sure we do it across the university. You have to show you are doing this for it to rub off on others. Some people worry that this might impact their jobs and workload, but SR must add to and enrich the job.

Manny Contomanolis (MC) said: We don't have to do much convincing. The cultural press, the way we frame SR is quite different today. The new generations are looking at this very differently, sustainability is certainly more upfront and relevant today.

We find that organisations that do not embrace this will not attract the best talent.

Institutions that prepare graduates for these SR criteria become more attractive. If they can identity it as a distinctive feature, they will attract the best students and staff. There is some perception that work in SR and ESG is for the more privileged, and we need to open this up to all job seekers and all graduates.

Julia George (JG) said: Equality is not about treating everyone equally, it's about treating equals equally and "unequals" unequally. Universities are doing the right thing and I applaud City and Manchester. But we need to teach critical thinking and "purpose" to very young children. The journey should start from toddler age. We want to turn these thoughts into something that works, practically.

RW agreed: We have to challenge accepted norms, and openly, no matter which [professional] sphere you are in.

Andrew Vautier (AC) said: We have embedded social responsibility very deeply at Accenture. We define SR in a 360 degree social value programme, displayed as a wheel, constructed by financial, talent, operations = the usual, but also inclusion,

diversity, etc. Our results are presented to the stock market normally but also directors present results against the 360 value wheel. Internally we have as much pride in achieving strong results in social value as in the financial report.

We also have many bottom-up initiatives, to balance the top-downs. In India the firm planted a tree for every 40,000 steps our employees walked. We have spent 5 million hours on volunteering, 4 million paid by the firm. All this has become embedded in the daily language of the firm, not buried at the back of a big report.

RW: Does this sustain in economic downturns?

AC: It's true that in the last quarter our analysts were more interested n fundamentals. But we are staying the course with the strategy, and just need to emphasis one or two segments of the wheel more vocally.

Andrew noted that many sessions at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January were devoted to SR, despite the looming recession.

AC: There is room for people to pivot around these themes, rather than say there is economic trouble so we can't afford ESG, or SR this year. It is not true. My sons desire to work for organisations that present more balanced principles is very strong, and is true for their whole generation – we need to let the young carry it through with passion.

Prof Mike Sutcliffe (MS): At the Engineering Professors Council one point we see is that we have too much language, acronyms and pseudonyms and complexity. They are all interrelated. ESG means different things to different people, and using varied terms makes it even more complex. To move forward we need to define the ESG tools and know how to use them in the real world, or people won't understand them.

We should not let perfection be the enemy of the good, Andrew suggested.

Questions

An audience asked NT: what are the metrics for collaboration in your social value portal?

And the panel, how can we anticipate employers' SRP and ESG requirements of the future?

NT: the portal is for Manchester City Council to deliver more for local people when it buys services and products for the city. It has metrics designed to measure the value.

MC: in the United States there are many think tanks focused on this issue, like the WEF who focus on future skills. Are there brand new skills, or are there current skills that will become more valuable but need to change? The HE institutions are monitoring these at all levels, it's becoming a mature field or industry of its own.

MS: McKinsey and other reports reveal some of these. But we also need more generic skillsets as well as transferable skills. Its also about *the mindset*: how we use any skills we have to problem-solve? The flexibility of people to apply themselves to employers' needs.

Julia reiterated the importance of mindset that you embed in the culture of firms.

NT: universities need to look at what society needs now and tomorrow. If they don't, you will be redundant. Ten years ago we did not have a course in AI – now we do, and for other new disciplines. We must study our

local communities and address their needs.

Rob chairs several companies. How they select leaders now is very different to the criteria 15 or more years ago. Resilience is essential, co-creation and critical listening are now highly prized but they were not important years ago.

Audience question:

Students get fixated on the last percentage point for their target grade. How do we make it clearer that employers are looking for breadth and new aptitudes, not just grades?

AV: Students getting good grades are the entry criteria to a more nuanced competition where behavioural qualities matter more. Many jobs have 50, 100 or more excellent applicants for the post so they don't have the resource to open the net too wide. It shouldn't be just if you get a A* you are straight into a top job at Google, but you need good grades to access a pool to demonstrate your softer skills.

NT agreed. Could we design or modify courses that enables critical thinking and assess their ability here and make them more employable?

MS: It is both, but it's also about how the HE organisation assesses students appropriately. Students may have all the knowledge, but howdo we assess their aptitude and preparedness for the real world?

We want to see how students from different learning pathways use their knowledge to make decisions.And assess their ability to synthesise knowledge and channel this into ESG decisions.

MC: Learners don't trust educators about employment. The best voices to advise are employers themselves – learners really listen to them. If a desirable employer says these soft skills and critical thinking is more important to them than the hard grades alone, that resonates. Learners also take advice from other learners willingly. We should leverage both avenues.

Find out more

City's tradition of providing high quality education relevant to business and the professions dates back 160 years. For many of our graduates, time spent at City laid the groundwork for leadership, innovation and excellence that have changed the world we live in.

JAN 10

The next Developing Social Responsibility in the Professions symposium will be at City University on **Wednesday 10th January 2024**

Email enquiries
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