Stakeholder dialogue through the Internet: an empirical analysis of stakeholder engagement initiatives of UK FTSE100 companies

Paper by: **Leonardo Rinaldi**
Royal Holloway

Alessia D'Andrea
Polytechnic University of Marche

Jeffrey Unerman
Royal Holloway

CRIS re-launch
Royal Holloway, University of London, 18 February 2009

Royal Holloway
University of London

Motivations and aim of paper

- Stakeholder engagement practices have been regarded by academics and practitioners as a central component of CSR governance mechanisms, in identifying and responding to issues faced by companies.

- Drawn on insights in Unerman & Bennett (2004) on Internet stakeholder dialogue

- It might be expected that if corporations were serious about CSR stakeholder engagement, they should be making the most of the new facilities offered by the Internet

- AIM: **critically analyse the use companies make of the intrinsic interactive potential of the Internet to increase the effectiveness of stakeholder dialogue on CSR issues**

Methods for website analysis

- Analysed website of each FTSE100 company to identify stakeholder engagement facilities

- Started with each company's home page
  - each link devoted to a potential stakeholder engagement tools was followed
  - reviewed CSR sections, discussion sections, press releases, terms and condition of use, and in few cases, dedicated web sites
  - used the "search" facility on each web site, where available, using keywords such as "engagement", "stakeholder engagement", "dialogue", "blog"

- Took notes of each element of a website that could potentially be used to engage in dialogue with a range of non-owner stakeholders
  - both unidirectional and multidirectional

Summary & conclusions (i)

- Presence of CSR section and/or report - 95 companies
- Facilities to contact company electronically – 94 companies
- Mailing lists, mail alerts – 67 companies
- Aggregators – 29 companies
- Frequently asked questions – 69, but only 19 S&E FAQs
- Online reports on meetings or consultations – 9 companies
- Online feedback questionnaires – 9 companies
- Web forums and blogs – 7, but only 1 dedicated to CSR
- Web accessibility tools – 70 companies

Summary & conclusions (ii)

Presence of CSR section	**95**
+ **Facilities to contact company electronically**	**91**
+ **Presence of CSR report**	**81**
+ **Web accessibility tools**	**62**
+ **Frequently asked questions**	**48**
+ **Mailing lists, mail alerts**	**36**
+ **Aggregators**	**11**
+ **Online reports on meetings or consultations**	**2**
+ **Online feedback questionnaires**	**1**
+ **Web forums and blogs**	**0**

Conclusions

- **Not much use of interactive potential of web for stakeholder engagement**
- **This raises questions of corporate commitments to stakeholder engagement in practice**