

## ***GREEN BUSINESS: SORTING FACT FROM HYPE***



***A workshop for the Society of American Business Editors and Writers conference, April 28, 2008***

***Presented in collaboration with the Society of Environmental Journalists***

Joel Makower, chairman, executive editor, Greener World Media

Ben Elgin, writer, *Business Week*

Meg Voorhes, head, environmental, social and governance research, RiskMetrics Group

Moderated by: Tim Wheeler, reporter, *The Baltimore Sun*

## PANEL BIOS

### Joel Makower

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Makower is chairman and executive editor of Greener World Media, Web sites and newsletters focusing on green business practices, led by GreenBiz.com. Makower has been covering green business for nearly twenty years. From 1991 to 2005, he was editor of *The Green Business Letter*, an award-winning monthly newsletter on corporate environmental strategy.

A graduate in journalism from the University of California at Berkeley, Makower is an advisor to more than a dozen start-ups and non-profit organizations. The Associated Press has called Joel "the guru of green business practices."

He is author of several books on business and sustainability; a frequent commentator in print, broadcast, and online media; and a regular lecturer to companies and business groups. He also is a co-founder and principal of Clean Edge Inc., a research and publishing firm focusing on clean technologies, and serves as a senior consultant to GreenOrder, a sustainability strategy firm.

### Ben Elgin

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Elgin is an investigative reporter with *BusinessWeek*, a position he assumed two years ago. In this role, he has probed topics ranging from business and global warming to cyber crime.

Elgin originally joined BusinessWeek in 2000 as a technology correspondent. Prior to BW, he spent four years writing for technology trade publications at Ziff Davis.

## Meg Voorhes

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Voorhes is the Head of Environmental, Social and Governance Research for RiskMetrics Group's Financial Research and Analysis unit. She edits *Corporate Social Issues Reporter*, a monthly journal, and frequently advises on corporate sustainability issues.

She is a director and the treasurer of the Social Investment Forum, a membership association for the U.S.-based socially responsible investing industry and its service providers.

Before RiskMetrics Group, Voorhes was the director of the Social Issues Service of the Investor Responsibility Research Center for several years. Among other publications, she co-edited IRRC's 1998 book, *The Sweatshop Quandary: Corporate Responsibility on the Global Frontier*.

For much of her career, Voorhes specialized in issues related to multinational investment in South Africa. From 1990 through 1998, she directed IRRC's Southern Africa Service. She contributed a chapter on "The U.S. Divestment Movement and South Africa" to *How Sanctions Work* (MacMillan, 1999), and is the author or co-author of several other studies on corporate responsibility and apartheid in South Africa. She is a graduate of Wesleyan University and earned a Master of International Public Policy degree from the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

## Tim Wheeler

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Wheeler covers growth for *The Baltimore Sun*. He has written about the environment frequently in his 30-year journalistic career, which included a decade as the beat reporter for *The Evening Sun* and then *The Sun* after the two papers merged. He spent two years as an editor helping to coordinate *The Sun's* medical, science, religion and environmental coverage, during which reporters for the paper won an award from the Society of Environmental Journalists for spot-news coverage of a chemical-laden train fire in downtown Baltimore.

Before coming to Baltimore, he worked for newspapers in Richmond and Norfolk, VA., and for Media General News Service in Washington, D.C. He is a graduate of the University of Virginia, with a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University.

## Links & Tips

### ***From Joel:***

His own Web-based publications, all dealing with green business:

<http://www.greenbiz.com>

<http://www.climatebiz.com>

<http://www.greenerbuildings.com>

<http://www.greenercomputing.com>

Plus, a link for GreenBiz.com's "State of Green Business 2008"

<http://www.stateofgreenbusiness.com>

Also, my blog, <http://readjoel.com>, deals with a lot of these topics.

Enough for self-promotion.

Beyond that are some other key resources:

<http://www.wbcd.com>

<http://www.treehugger.com>

<http://marketinggreen.wordpress.com>

<http://www.greentechmedia.com>

<http://www.worldchanging.com>

### ***From Ben:***

Corporate Register ([www.corporateregister.com](http://www.corporateregister.com)): A clearinghouse of corporate sustainability reports. Great to see what companies have talked about in years past, particularly if you're trying to gauge their progress.

Carbon Disclosure Project ([www.cdproject.net](http://www.cdproject.net)). In addition to the link Meg pointed out, just plugging in and searching for company results on the main page is incredibly valuable.

CA Climate Registry ([www.climateregistry.org](http://www.climateregistry.org)). Lots of detailed reports here. Some from companies who are promising to reduce emissions. Some from purveyors of offsets who provide documentation behind the offset projects.

Other good news sites/blogs:

DeSmogBlog: [www.desmogblog.com](http://www.desmogblog.com)

Climate Progress: [www.climateprogress.org](http://www.climateprogress.org) Dot Earth: [dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com](http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com)

Grist: [www.grist.org](http://www.grist.org)

Environmental Leader: [www.environmentalleader.com](http://www.environmentalleader.com)

## **From Meg:**

Here are three links to reports or analyses the RiskMetrics Group has recently prepared on corporate environmental issues.

- <http://www.cdproject.net/cdp5reports.asp>: This link takes you to the list of reports the Carbon Disclosure Project commissioned to analyze the responses of companies around the world to its 5th annual survey on climate change issues. RiskMetrics prepared the analysis of the S&P 500 firms' responses.
- [http://www.issproxy.com/pdf/20071115\\_esg\\_study\\_global\\_sustainability.pdf](http://www.issproxy.com/pdf/20071115_esg_study_global_sustainability.pdf): This link take you to an overview analysis of data we collected on 1,700 global companies—including the S&P 500 and the Morgan Stanley EAFE index excluding Japan—with regard to their policies and reporting relating to climate change, other environmental issues, labor and human rights, and ethics.
- [http://www.issproxy.com/pdf/ceres\\_climate\\_change\\_banking\\_report2008.pdf](http://www.issproxy.com/pdf/ceres_climate_change_banking_report2008.pdf): This is the link to our study assessing major financial firms on corporate governance and climate change.

Sources other than RiskMetrics

[www.ceres.org](http://www.ceres.org) : Lots of good reports here.

This user-friendly site developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency aims "to help business, government and private citizens make intelligent choices on sustainable environmental benefits" <http://www.epa.gov/stewardship/>.

This is a bit further afield for business journalists, but particularly those who cover real estate and property development should check out the American Society of Landscape Architects website with regard to its green roof: <http://www.asla.org/land/050205/greenroofcentral.html> . It's inspiring. Meaningful environmental actions, whether by business or anyone else, need not be high tech: green roofs reduce heating and cooling costs, reduce stormwater runoff, and reduce pollution.

Similarly, I also recommend the book *Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream* (written by the principals of an architecture and urban planning firm) as an excellent primer on how our built environment and urban planning can be improved to reduce energy costs and car dependence.

## **From Tim:**

Here are a couple more great sources of reporting on green business:

Marc Gunther, senior writer at FORTUNE magazine, CNMMoney columnist, and GreenBiz.com blogger, [http://www.marcgunther.com/?page\\_id=28](http://www.marcgunther.com/?page_id=28)

"Environmental Capital," daily blog in *The Wall Street Journal* on business and environment, by Keith Johnson and Jeffrey Ball, <http://blogs.wsj.com/environmentalcapital/>