

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

Going Public on Performance
Reporting Health and Safety Performance on Company Websites
A RoSPA Report

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May 2003

We are always interested in receiving feedback. If you have any comments or questions, please email me on lnguyen@rospa.com

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Appendix 1. Examples of Companies Web-based Performance Information

Foreword

This report by RoSPA demonstrates that some companies are providing health and safety performance information publicly on their websites but the quality and content currently varies greatly. It is clear that in today's increasingly knowledgeable and global society, technology like the Internet can make spreading the safety message and sharing best practices with others so much easier. I therefore commend this report by RoSPA which seeks to promote an examination of the real advantages as well as the perceived disadvantages associated with reporting publicly on the Web to meet the needs of a wide variety of interests including shareholders, employees, regulators, insurers, potential investors and the media.

The Revitalising Health and Safety strategy, launched by the Government and Health and Safety Commission in 2000, presented a 10-year strategy with headline targets for achieving significant improvements in workplace health and safety. These will not be achieved unless organisations in turn set and achieve their own targets by demonstrating that they currently monitor and record key indicators such as incidents and days lost and that they have systems, arrangements and plans in place to report to regulators and other stakeholders.

A company's past and current health and safety record and its progress in meeting its own targets are therefore matters of public interest. However there are still companies who think that health and safety performance is only about bad news and therefore 'no news is good news'. There are also cynics who may view this as an opportunity to 'create the illusion of doing something while accomplishing little or nothing'. But it is precisely because preventable accidents and health damage still occur everyday in the workplace that public reporting is so important. Clearly annual reports and websites are not just superficial shop windows to attract customers and investors; they are powerful tools for demonstrating trust and open communications, reaching out to address the information needs of all major stakeholders.

I hope that this report, which reviews current practice and makes some good practical recommendations, will go some way towards helping companies who want to start reporting publicly health and safety performance information on the Web. It will also help in encouraging companies that have already started to make good progress in this area and I hope it will encourage others to learn from those organisations that have managed to establish themselves as exemplars for others to learn from and emulate.

Lord Faulkner of Worcester
President of RoSPA

Views from key figures

“This is an area identified for action by the Government and the Health & Safety Commission in their joint Strategy Statement *Revitalising Health and Safety*. The Commission and the Health & Safety Executive together with RoSPA and others have already done much to encourage businesses to report publicly on their performance in managing risks to occupational health and safety.

RoSPA’s report complements what the Commission is doing. Amongst other things, it helps to underline the ease with which this sort of information can be made available through the Internet.

The corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agenda is increasingly important and health and safety is a vital element of CSR.

I hope this excellent report will help spread the message about the importance of making health and safety performance transparent.”

Bill Callaghan, Chair, Health & Safety Commission

“I can recommend Europe’s corporate communicators to read this latest RoSPA report. It highlights the importance of reporting on occupational safety and health performance to all of a company’s stakeholders. As with other aspects of corporate social responsibility, there’s a strong business case, as well as an ethical one, for doing this and the company website is the ideal place to publish the information.”

Hans-Horst Konkolewsky, Director, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work

“IOSH strongly supports the case for including health and safety performance in annual reports and indeed has issued guidance on this subject. We also recognise the growing importance of the Internet as a medium for making information about organisations accessible to a wider range of stakeholders. IOSH is pleased to endorse this report, a version of which can also be found in our Learned Journal.”

Rob Strange, Chief Executive, Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)

“The IoD encourages e-business, and this includes use of websites to disseminate practices in key areas. Occupational safety and health is one such area. A major topic at present is encouraging directors and others to have an appreciation of strategic issues for overseeing health and safety performance. Most certainly a "one-size fits all" regulatory approach to corporate reporting must be avoided. On the other hand, thoughtful use of the Internet can help spread and encourage good practice and exchange of ideas. RoSPA has made an important contribution to the field.”

Geraint Day, Health and Environment Policy Adviser, Institute of Directors (IoD)

“Web-based reporting won't necessarily reduce injury or illness rates, but it could help to raise the status of risk management as a corporate performance issue and increase accountability. The Web offers greater access for key stakeholders like trade unions. But without clarity about what to report and how, it could just be more corporate PR guff. Health and safety information released via the Web needs to be clear about the cost of health and safety failures, and needs to be agreed in partnership with unions.”

Owen Tudor, Senior Policy Officer, Trades Union Congress (TUC)

A. Executive summary

This report results from a study carried out by RoSPA to explore and assess the presence and quality of health and safety information on companies' corporate websites (not including information which may appear in website annual reports).

It needs to be viewed alongside recent Health and Safety Commission (HSC) initiatives, particularly the HSC's challenge to Britain's top 350 companies to commit to reporting annually on their health and safety policies and performance against targets in line with HSC guidance.

The report also discusses technical issues such as the location of health and safety information on company websites and ease of navigation.

It presents the case for 'going public on performance' through transparent and accessible reporting that allows companies to benchmark their performance against each other while showing various stakeholders that the company takes health and safety seriously.

Conclusions:

- Some companies already report their health and safety performance on the Internet, and some to a very high standard.
- This trend is to be encouraged but, to be of value, the quality of information (currently variable) must be ensured.
- The public reporting of health and safety practices and performance, whether via the Internet¹, annual reports, health and safety reports or corporate social responsibility reports, should be based on an agreed minimum standard rather than currently varying and inconsistent approaches.
- Health and safety information, whether Web-based or in printed form should be clearly signposted for a consistent and co-ordinated approach which is meaningful for different types of audience.

¹ In this paper, the terms 'Web' and 'Internet' are used interchangeably.

B. Introduction

The Government's 'Revitalising Health and Safety' (RHS) initiative (DETR/HSC 2000) has set national health and safety improvement targets to be met by 2010 (with half of these targets to be met by 2004). These targets are:

- to reduce the incidence of working days lost through work-related injury and ill health by 30 per cent;
- to reduce the incidence of work-related ill health by 20 per cent; and
- to reduce the rate of fatal and major injury accidents by 10 per cent.

However, there has been little guidance on how companies should translate these national figures to set relevant targets for their own companies, groups or industry².

As part of the RHS initiative the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has challenged Britain's top 350 companies to commit to reporting annually on their health and safety policies, performance and targets. The HSE has issued guidance of such reporting (2001, www.hse.gov.uk/revitalising/annual.htm) and research was commissioned to analyse health and safety reporting in these 350 companies (Peebles et al. 2002).

Findings from HSE research include:

- only 107 reports (30 per cent) included the relevant information,
- of which 88 per cent presented information pertaining to health and safety principles,
- 34 per cent contained performance data such as number of injuries, accidents and fatalities,
- only 13 per cent reported on targets set for improving performance,
- while reporting on health and safety by the FTSE 100 companies increased from 47 per cent in 1995 to 60 per cent in 2001, the quality of reporting still varies greatly.
- The report notes that, "at present, publicly listed companies are not legally required to include health and safety matters in their annual reports" but that the HSC aims to promote reporting and to provide guidance that allows reporting to a common standard.

Action point 2 in the RHS Strategy Statement (DETR/HSC 2000) focuses on encouraging public reporting of health and safety by large companies. Company annual reports were chosen as a means of communicating this information with a view to setting a common standard. However, it could be argued that there are a variety of ways to report on health and safety performance, such as on company websites.

RoSPA has looked specifically at the extent to which organisations are using the Internet to communicate and present up-to-date information on their health and safety performance (outside of website annual reports), to demonstrate public accountability, corporate transparency, commitment, and 'best practice'.

² RoSPA has recently launched their report on 'Targets for Change' which covers this issue.

C. The Internet as a reporting and communication channel

As a communication channel, the Internet has many uses and serves a different purpose to annual reports and therefore may provide different types of information to a wider set of audiences.

The Internet (sometimes also called ‘the Net’, ‘the World Wide Web’ or ‘the Web’) is a worldwide system of computer networks from which users at any one computer can, if they have permission, get information from any other computer. The Internet is a public, co-operative, self-sustaining and widely accessible facility.

An Intranet on the other hand is a private network that is contained within an enterprise or organisation and is usually only accessible to employees on site or linked via local networks. As Intranets are not accessible to the general public, this report only examines information that is available publicly on the Internet.

The obvious **advantages of the Internet** have led to it becoming indispensable for many people in carrying out their daily work.

- Compared to printed company reports and other mediums the Internet is a more instant, dynamic and accessible form of communication. It has the potential to provide information that is updated on a regular basis.
- The Internet can also be a more democratic way of communicating. For example, a website is often set up to allow a number of individuals or groups to contribute information to certain sections of it.
- It allows people to find a wide range of information fairly quickly and easily in their own time and from almost any location (especially with the help of a good ‘search engine’), to find contacts for further information and to download (save and print) large files.
- It allows sharing of information with others (also through e-mails, on-line discussion forums and teleconferencing). It is this sharing of information that makes the Web so useful, particularly with regard to sharing good practice and learning from others.

The **disadvantages and difficulties of using the Web** are also inherent in the nature of the medium. For example:

- new information may be added, modified or removed at any time without prior warning;
- there is also the danger that information is not updated and maintained, and will therefore cease to be relevant to the needs of different users; and
- as the Web is a huge network, some links may not be easily evident and a thorough search may still leave information hidden from view.

Key audiences for communications via the Web

As a powerful, direct and growing means of communicating and informing about the state of a company’s health and safety record to a wider audience, the Internet provides an important interface between the company and a wide set of stakeholders. Stakeholders include not only shareholders and investors but also employees, management, trade unions, customers, suppliers, contractors, insurers, regulators, competitors, the media, researchers, safety organisations and the general public (see Table 1). Some companies are already moving in this direction and setting a standard for others to follow, using their websites to provide a range of services such as

separate links for investors, the media and employees and downloadable files and feedback forms or contact information for various types of inquiries.

Companies considering making use of, or developing the Web, as a means of communicating health and safety information should ensure that their website contains a minimum set of data on the company's health and safety management system that reflects the needs and interests of the company and its stakeholders. This should include information on safety culture, commitment and responsibilities for health and safety, policies/principles, performance, targets and contacts and/or feedback details. In addition, the particular needs and interests of different Web user groups or target audiences such as employees, regulators and investors could be acknowledged through further signposting of relevant information, such as that listed in Table 1.

Table 1 Web users and their health and safety information needs

Web users	Needs/ interests (additional to core H&S policy and performance information)
Employees (current and potential)	Links to work-related policies, forms, surveys, consultation measures; intranet
Management	Board and management organisation and responsibilities, legal requirements, how safety fits in with other business goals and commitments
Trade Unions	Consultation arrangements, target setting and injury and ill-health data and costs
Shareholders and investors	The progress made on performance targets, commitment and implementation plans, goals for the future, the cost and benefits of health and safety, ethical issues
Customers	Commitments and principles regarding safety, product safety, ethical business practices, contacts
Suppliers	Safety data sheets, certification
Contractors	Safety requirements, passport schemes, safety policies, performance and targets especially for contractors.
Insurers	Benchmarking exercises, targets, health and safety plans, cost of health and safety losses
Regulators	More rigorous standards detailing commitment to the spirit as well as the letter of the law, implementation of health and safety management systems, performance measures, targets
Competitors	Benchmarking exercises, sharing best practice, tools for implementation of plan
Media	Reports
Researchers/students	Reports, other relevant documents
Safety organisations	Awards, identifying partners for health and safety promotion and research
General public	Ease of access, contact details

D. RoSPA research on Web-based reporting

The research for this report involved locating and exploring the websites of the companies listed and researched in a report commissioned by the HSC on the UK's top 350 limited companies (Peebles et al. 2002). Company websites were searched using the popular Internet 'search engines' 'Google' and 'AltaVista'. If company sites had a search facility, these were also searched by inputting the key words 'health and safety'. The websites were reviewed between August and September 2002 and thus this report reflects the information available at that time.

Companies were not contacted for assistance on how to find their websites in order to test how easy it was to locate the corporate sites without assistance and also to ensure that the research proposal did not influence changes in the content of the websites during the research period.

A follow-up study to this research could make use of direct contact with these companies to assess whether Web presence and health and safety reporting via the Web have improved and, if so, why they have improved. This would be useful for investigation of companies whose websites could not be found or which did not contain relevant or sufficient information during the period of this research.

Where Web addresses were located, these were reviewed for health and safety information. Annual reports found on 125 websites were not investigated, the aim of the research being to find non-annual report locations for health and safety information and avoid duplication of HSE research.

The information was assessed by following the rating system used in the HSE research on health and safety information in companies' annual reports (Peebles et al. 2002) and HSC guidance (2001). Three categories of information were examined, as shown in Table 2.

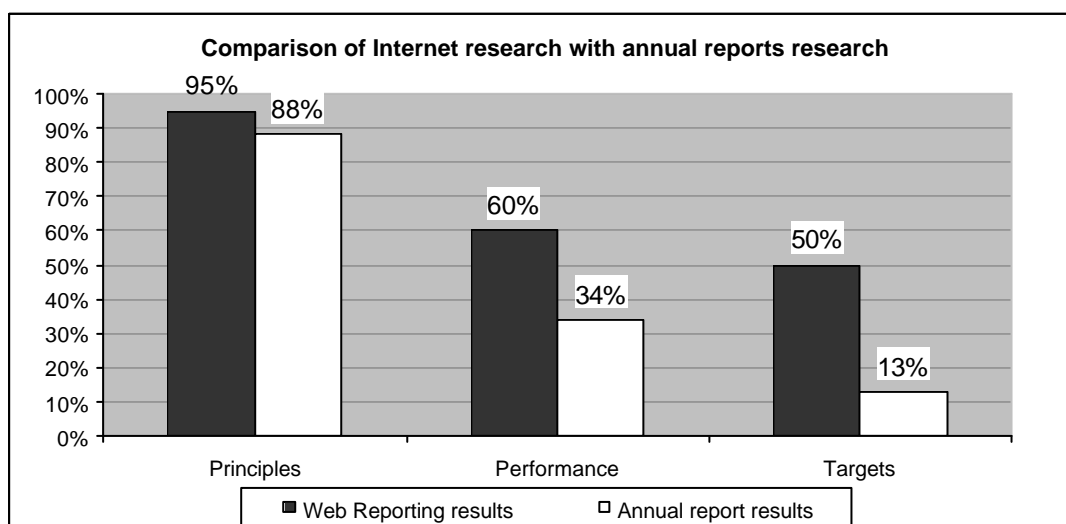
Table 2 Method for assessing information on principles, performance and targets

Categories	Criteria	Rating system
<i>Principles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad context of policy • Significant risks, control strategies and systems • Health and safety goals • Progress towards goals • Employee consultation and representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low = 1 of 5 items reported • medium = 2 or 3 items • high = 4 or 5 items
<i>Performance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of injuries, illnesses and dangerous occurrences • Circumstances of fatalities and prevention actions • Number of cases of physical and mental illness caused or made worse • Number of employee days lost due to illness and injury • Number of enforcement notices • Number and nature of conviction for health and safety offences • Total cost to company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low = 1 or 2 of 7 items reported • medium = 3 or 4 items • high = 5 or more items
<i>Targets</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, a sentence outlining that the company had targets or objectives • For example, to reduce the incidence of accidents by 50 per cent by 2002 • For example, to reduce incidence of ill health by 10 per cent, as well as both of the above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low = general information presented • medium = if a numeric target was also detailed • high score = if more than one numeric target was detailed

E. Summary of research findings

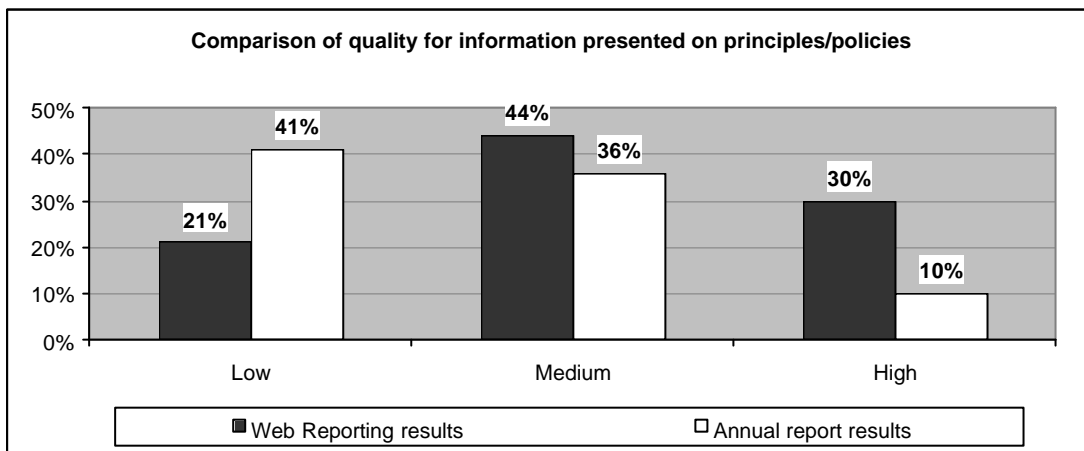
- RoSPA located website health and safety information (excluding information in website annual reports), for only 129 of the UK's top 350 companies and these were assessed for quality and ease of access.
- The quality of information varied greatly, as did the ease of finding and navigating the relevant websites.
- Health and safety information was found in a number of locations, varying from that presented on dedicated corporate health and safety links, to information found within Web-based reports such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reports and environmental reports (see Table 3).
- Only on 13 (10 per cent) of those websites assessed was the health and safety information 'very easy to find' (where health and safety was indicated on the website's front page). The majority of websites required some level of searching for the relevant information.
- Health and safety information was often linked to 'CSR' related links, with 52 (40 per cent) located in this way. This figure does not include the many more company websites that have CSR links but no health and safety content within those links.
- A range of additional information was also found, e.g. named group safety directors at board level, risk management initiatives such as accident investigation, ethical policies, community challenges, certification, awards, government initiatives such as 'Revitalising Health and Safety', product safety and emerging risks such as occupational road risk.
- No website could be found for 7 per cent of companies researched (25 companies). This does not necessarily mean that they did not have websites and could be due to company mergers, sales, buyouts and difficulty with website addresses.
- Of the 129 company websites that did contain health and safety information, 123 (95 per cent) reported on policies or principles, 77 company websites (60 per cent) reported on performance data, 64 companies (50 per cent) reported on health and safety targets set for their companies. These findings are compared against the HSE annual reports research (Peebles et al. 2002) in Fig. 1.

Figure 1 Comparison of Internet research with annual reports research



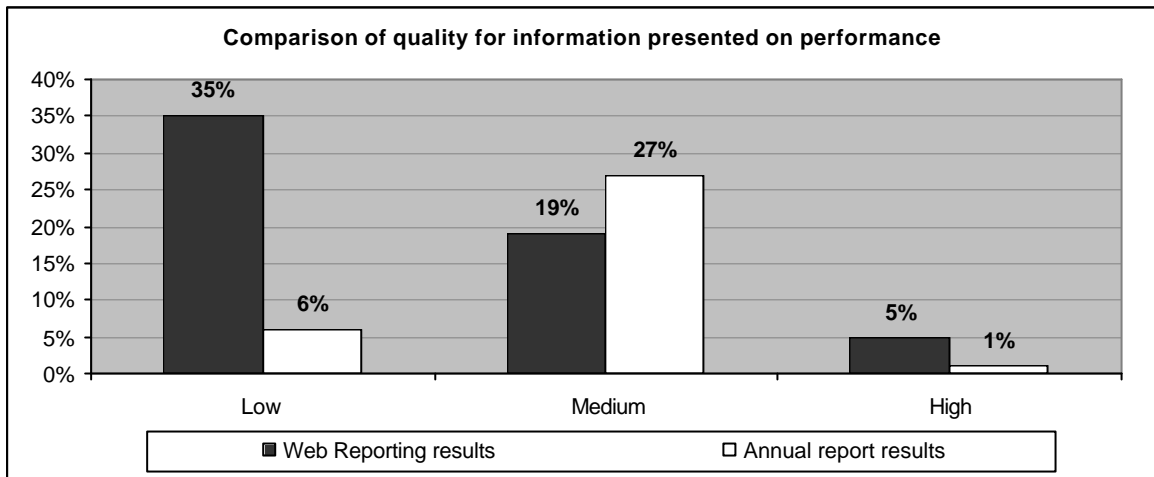
- Of the 129 company websites that did contain health and safety information, 56 (43 per cent) had some information on the three categories of ‘principles, performance and targets’. However, only six companies (5 per cent) were rated as ‘high’ across the board.
- Of the 129 company websites that did contain health and safety information, 123 (95 per cent) presented **information on principles or policies**, and the quality of most of this information was rated as ‘medium’ or ‘high’ (see Fig. 2). In summary, 27 companies (21 per cent) were rated as ‘low’, 57 companies (44 per cent) were rated as ‘medium’, and 39 companies (30 per cent) were rated as ‘high’. Fig. 2 also compares these findings against the HSE annual reports research (Peebles et al. 2002), where of the 107 analysed, 94 companies (88 per cent) reported information on their health and safety principles.

Figure 2 Comparison of quality of information presented on principles/policies



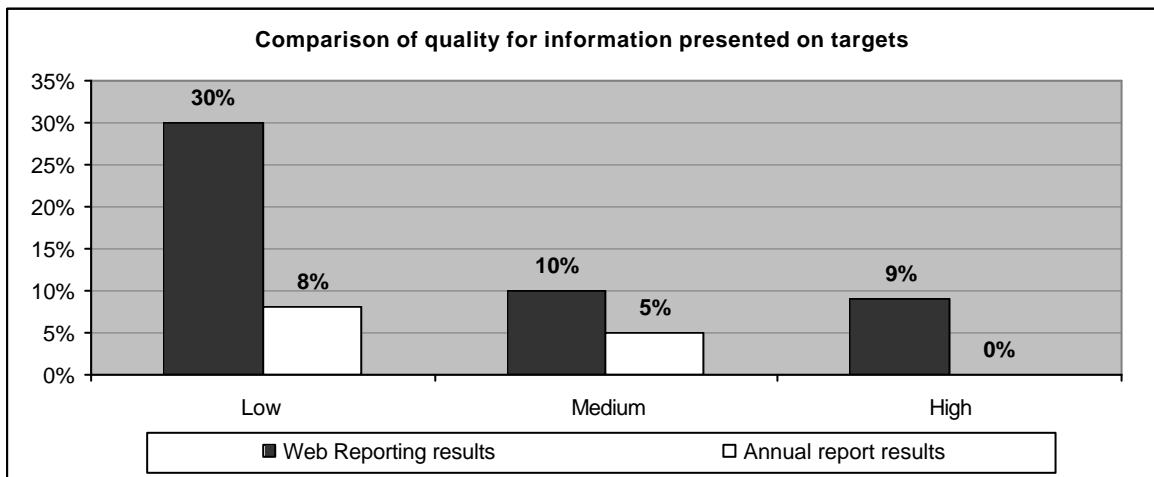
- Of the 129 company websites that did contain health and safety information, 77 (60 per cent) presented information on their **health and safety performance**. The quality of information for this category is largely rated as ‘low’ (see Fig. 4). In summary, 45 companies (35 per cent) were rated as ‘low’, 25 companies (19 per cent) were rated as ‘medium’, and 7 companies (5.5 per cent) were rated as ‘high’. Fig. 3 also compares these findings against the HSE annual reports research (Peebles et al. 2002) where 36 companies (34 per cent) of the 107 analysed reported information on their health and safety performance.

Figure 3 Comparison of quality for information presented on performance



- Of the 129 company websites that did contain health and safety information, 64 (50 per cent) presented information on their **health and safety targets**. The quality of information for this category for the majority is rated as 'low'. In summary, 39 companies (30 per cent) were rated as 'low', 13 companies (10 per cent) were rated as 'medium', and 12 companies (9 per cent) were rated as 'high'. Fig. 4 also compares these findings against the HSE annual reports research (Peebles et al. 2002) where 14 companies (13 per cent) of the 107 analysed reported information on their health and safety targets.

Figure 4 Comparison of results for quality of information presented on target



- Comparisons with the results of the HSE annual reports research (Peebles et al. 2002) found that some results are comparable, such as the percentage reporting on principles and policies. But the number and quality rating of those that report on performance and target issues appear in general to be better in Web-based information than those found in printed annual reports.
- With regard to the ease of navigating and finding relevant information, best practice in website design generally advocates the 'three clicks' rule, ie the viewer should only need to click on three links at most to find the relevant information. Only 13 companies make their health and safety information very easy to find by

placing it on the front page of their website (table 3). ‘About us’ or ‘company information’ was found to be the most common first link for health and safety information³, followed by ‘CSR’, ‘social responsibility’ or ‘community’. It is important to take both the first link and the second link into consideration when looking at the ease of navigating websites and finding information.

Table 3 Results for location of health & safety information on company websites

Location/links	1 st link ⁴	2 nd link ⁵
About us, corporate, company/ group information ⁶	57	
CSR, social responsibility, community,	24	28
Health and safety, EHS, Safety	13	28
Environment	9	10
Reports ⁷	4	11
Investors	4	7
People, employees	3	8
Policies	2	9
Performance	1	6
Others	1	

- A number of companies reported that health and safety performance data currently not on their websites would be disclosed publicly in the future. The reasons given for this were the influence of CSR reporting, HSC guidance on reporting and improved systems for the collation of records, particularly by large company groups.
- Although this factor did not count in the rating system, thirty-two companies (about 25 per cent) mentioned/listed national health and safety awards, such as those of the RoSPA and the British Safety Council, to demonstrate their commitment and recognition of performance.
- The results of this research do not indicate that some companies have no policy/principles, performance data or targets, merely that these are not currently available or found on their public websites. The results here relate to whether relevant information is found/available according to the above criteria set⁸ and is not a judgment of whether the company’s policy/principles, performance and targets themselves are adequate or not.

³ See footnote 6.

⁴ This means that it was an immediate or first link to click on a website page.

⁵ This indicates that the health and safety information was less easy to find as two web links must be navigated before the relevant information is found e.g. click on ‘Company information’ (link 1), then click on ‘CSR’ (link 2), and only then can you find ‘Health and safety information’.

⁶ ‘About us’ is the most commonly used pathway and is therefore almost the best place to search for health and safety information. However, it is not always the most accessible way because the health and safety information is usually found through further links from here, e.g. ‘CSR’, ‘environment’, ‘performance’ or ‘reports’.

⁷ This link refers to CSR, environment, health and safety reports and so on, but not annual reports.

⁸ Following the rating system of the HSE annual reports research, for comparative purposes, as shown in section D of this report.

F. Practical considerations

It is often the case that, even where company websites contain a lot of useful health and safety information, the process has not been well thought out in terms of its place in the overall scheme of company information. The presence of Web-based information and the location of health and safety information on the company website are important as they indicate how and to whom companies are communicating, the importance they place on health and safety, and their commitment to it.

Health and safety information that is only available through on-line annual reports or nestled in obscure website links, may not be convenient for different audiences, for those largely unfamiliar with the Internet or for those who do not have the time to 'surf the Net'.

The reasons why companies in general do or do not include health and safety information on the Internet are not well known and require further investigation.

Possible reasons for the lack of, or limited, health and safety information on corporate websites include:

- not thought about including health and safety information on the Web;
- thought about it but believe that doing so would serve no useful purpose;
- thought about it but believe that the disadvantages of doing so would outweigh the advantages (e.g. companies may still be reluctant to show facts or figures that they consider to be negative or damaging);
- no data or no comparative data to judge performance (e.g. companies may not be measuring their health and safety performance in a meaningful way);
- no collated health and safety information in a readily presentable format;
- no resources to upload, update or maintain data on the Web; or
- limited resources.

G. Barriers & benefits

Perceived barriers to website reporting

The perceived disadvantages or 'barriers' to presenting health and safety information on the web also require further investigation. In RoSPA's view, those 'barriers' relating to performance and targets include:

- negative impact on public relations;
- the issue of verification of data;
- the issue of maintaining, updating and reviewing information;
- the absence of data or comparative data against which to judge performance;
- the belief that doing so would be of no interest outside the company; and
- lack of support from senior management.

Benefits of website reporting

In RoSPA's view, companies which currently do not provide health and safety information on their websites are likely to find that, on closer examination, the

advantages of public reporting can outweigh the disadvantages and that the trend in companies moving towards better health and safety website reporting demonstrates and supports this.

Possible benefits include:

- gaining competitive advantage from reports by showing the extent of integration of economic, environmental and social success factors into business strategy;
- providing important information for investors and other stakeholders;
- contributing to 'sustainability' and CSR reporting;
- facilitating best practice 'benchmarking';
- highlighting successes, improvements and commitment to health and safety;
- highlighting achievements such as health and safety awards and thus contributing to good public relations and/or employee morale;
- monitoring progress in health and safety performance and initiatives;
- demonstrating transparency and accountability in reporting; and
- signposting of relevant information such as health and safety reports, annual reports, CSR reports and other external sources of information, eg the HSE website.

H. Recommendations

Health and safety information on corporate websites

All major organisations should give favourable consideration to providing details of their health and safety policies, performances and plans on their websites. All public sector employers, including Government Departments, should consider following the lead provided by major companies.

Annual reports and Web signposting

Even if it becomes common practice for companies to provide relevant health and safety information in their annual reports, they should still provide a copy of the report on their websites and signpost where on the Web further relevant information can be found or what sections of the report are relevant (without the need for downloading and reading the entire report).

Decision-making

Certain information is provided through different channels of communication e.g. some companies have health and safety performance information on their websites but not in their printed annual reports, and vice versa. Decisions relating to content and availability of information need to filter throughout the organisation in order to ensure consistency and commitment.

Corporate social responsibility

RoSPA research has shown that website health and safety information is largely either linked to or influenced by social responsibility reporting⁹. Despite some lack of consensus as to what should be measured, many companies have started to use CSR

⁹ Social responsibility reporting is also influencing company reporting in a number of other areas, including environment and community initiatives. Therefore, there is a general drive for consistency in this area.

guidance as a basis for their reporting and the HSC and HSE have indicated that they have initiatives underway to raise the profile of health and safety on the CSR agenda¹⁰.

Many company websites have a CSR section containing information on environment, sustainability, ethics and community issues, but no health and safety information. This could represent a missed opportunity for a linkage, which companies may wish to redress. It is suggested that, for consistency and to raise the profile of health and safety, this trend could be supported and therefore Web-based information is best located either as a main link on the front/‘home’ page (for maximum accessibility) or under a link for ‘CSR’ (for greater consistency).

Location of health and safety information on websites

As stated earlier, the location of health and safety information on company websites is crucially important (and often based on a variety of interests, preferences and objectives). However, for maximum accessibility, consistency and raised health and safety profile (also based on the results of RoSPA’s research see Table 3), the following order of preference for placing health and safety information on company websites is suggested:

- front/ ‘home’ page link as ‘health and safety’, ‘environment, health and safety’ (EHS), ‘safety, health and environment’ (SHE) or ‘safety’;
- ‘about us’, ‘company information’, ‘group’ or ‘corporate’¹¹;
- ‘CSR’, ‘sustainability’, ‘corporate values’, ‘community’ or ‘social commitment’;
- ‘policies’;
- ‘our people’, ‘employees’ or ‘employment’;
- ‘performance’ or ‘statistics’;
- ‘environment’;
- ‘investors’; and
- ‘reports’ or ‘other’.

Content and navigation

The Internet is a powerful tool and can communicate a great deal of information, however the key to managing this and to communicating clearly is to think about what information should be included and how it should be presented. The best websites are not only those which are clear and simple to find, see and read but those which contain a number of levels to explore subjects in more depth.

Even for organisations with good health and safety Web pages, improvements can be made by ensuring that: the information remains up-to-date; the health and safety website content is easily found, accessed and navigated; and that there are contact points for obtaining further information.

¹⁰ Kate Timms presentation at RoSPA Congress 2002.

¹¹ This is listed as being the second most desirable location but only if health and safety information is easily found as a direct link from this, i.e. without requiring the need to go through further links from here to ‘environment’, ‘people’ and so on before finding ‘health and safety’.

Regular review

Companies should review all their related websites and consider co-ordinating the available information, even if this is just to signpost links.

Checklist:

- Keep the information simple to begin with.
- Ensure indepth information is available through further links.
- Consider the purpose and intention of the Web pages.
- Think about what should be on the Web – highlight what is not yet available on the Web but should be included in future e.g. targets.
- Consider the target audiences – employees, managers, contractors, investors, etc.
- Think about presentation styles for ease of navigating, reading and consistency.
- Think about who maintains and supplies the necessary information for updating.
- Think about regular reviews.
- Communicate and highlight major or important changes on the Web.
- Consider user-friendly options e.g. printing.
- Consider use of navigation aids – e.g. scrolling, links, etc.
- Highlight achievements such as awards and ongoing areas for improvement such as failures where lessons can be learnt.
- Substance over style - remember that a website that employs expensive, technical and complex features or designs may present more of a barrier than a good, clear and straightforward website with useful information.

I. Conclusion

This report argues that there is a need for better health and safety reporting and public accountability by companies. The challenge posed is how to overcome current barriers and meet stakeholder needs. A performance-focused approach to health and safety should demonstrate inputs such as risk management capability and culture as well as outputs such as safe systems of work and outcomes such as fewer accidents and injuries. RoSPA's guidance 'Towards Best Practice' (2001) and 'Targets For Change' (2002) argues for a more holistic approach to performance assessment based on an 'evidence package', including targets which should be set and monitored following consultation. In addition, HSC (2001), IOSH (2002) and GRI guidance on reporting (2002), among others, are available to assist companies in their efforts to report publicly on their performance.

The Internet should be promoted as a valid and useful way of 'going public on performance' as it can address the needs of different audiences, allow improvement and updating of current information, and encourage benchmarking and best practice. It can fulfil this role independently or in conjunction with other accepted means of communication such as annual reports or health and safety reports. The Web can

incorporate a greater volume of information than standard reports, thus, companies not wishing to overload their formal annual reports, can indicate in those reports where additional health and safety information can be located on their websites and in turn their websites can be used to signpost or index the relevant health and safety section in their annual reports.

There is much that companies can do to improve their current websites with regard to health and safety. If the commitment is there, this could also encourage other companies to report on their performance and to further fulfil their health and safety duties.

A 'performance website portal'¹², with the purpose of linking together company sites containing health and safety performance information, is being considered. The 'portal' could provide a valuable network of good practice in health and safety performance reporting, encouraging companies not just to start or improve their own health and safety performance reporting but also to learn from the experience of other organisations.

Any comments or views on the idea of a performance website portal or on any subject covered in this report would be welcomed.

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23rd January 2003

¹² A web portal is a term, often used interchangeably with gateway, for a World Wide Web site whose purpose is to be a major starting point or a one-stop destination for users. A 'portal' can offer a broad array of resources and services, such as e-mail, forums, search engines, etc. A 'portal' can be a general gateway or a specialized/niche topic portal to disseminate information.

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Appendix 1. Examples of Companies Web-based Performance Information

There are a number of companies, which provide examples of best practice in Web reporting according to our research. These include Boots the Chemist Ltd, British Energy Plc, Carillion Construction Ltd, ICI Plc, and North West Water Ltd (United Utilities). We would recommend that you view the health and safety information available from these companies' websites.

Three further websites, ICI, AstraZeneca, and Lattice group, are explored below as examples of the kinds of information companies have provided on their websites. The examples are not laid out as they would appear on the website so for best results those websites should be visited using the URL addresses provided.

Example 1. ICI – Safety Health and Environment

<http://www.ici.com/icishe/2000/index.htm>

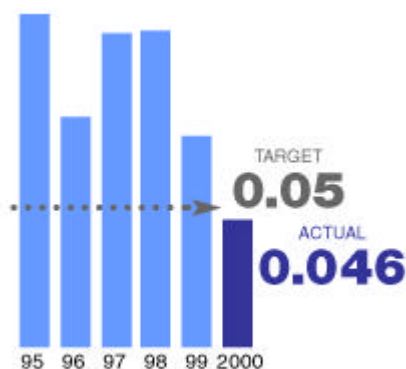
This example shows how performance targets in numerical form can be set and used to monitor health and safety performance over a number of years.

Safety Performance 1995 – 2000

2000 ends a 5 year programme to minimise injuries and work-related illness.

- Challenge 2005 is a new 5 year programme of targets across key environmental and H&S indicators that will maintain progress on improvements with new health and safety targets.
- Details circumstances around the fatalities of two ICI employees and one contractor in 2000.
- Injuries are recorded by 2 measures: Classified Injury Rate (injuries requiring medical attention beyond first aid) and within this total there is a sub category for more serious injuries which is the reportable injury rate (serious injuries that usually result in over three days lost time). An injury rate of 1.0 would mean that each employee might be injured once during their working life.

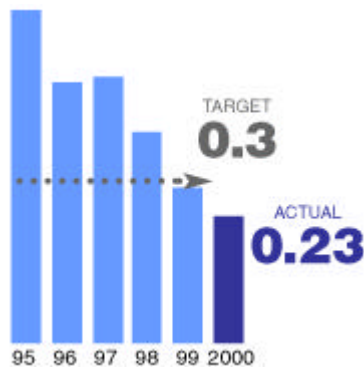
ICI Group Employee Reportable Injury Rate



- Challenge 2000 target – 0.05

- Result - the reportable injury rate for 2000 was 0.046, a 50% reduction on the figure for 1999. This is well under ICI's 2000 milestone of 0.05.

ICI Group Employee Classified Injury Rate



- Challenge 2000 target – 0.30
- Result – the classified injury rate in 2000 was 0.23, a reduction on 1999's figure and well below ICI's 2000 milestone.

Analysis of results – Attention to safety throughout the Group has produced improvements in performance in all businesses. This improvement has been achieved through management commitment, employee awareness and improved procedures for audit and risk assessment.

Other issues:

ICI also has a health performance 1995-2000 programme, measuring against set targets. On work related illness it has measures work-related allergies and noise induced hearing loss.

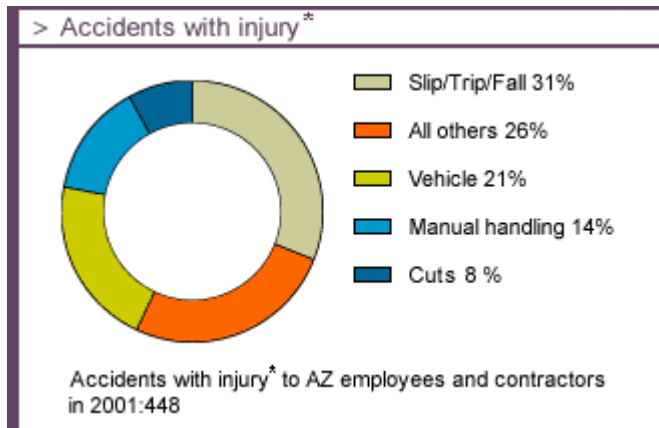
ICI also reports on their legal compliance i.e. fines and prosecutions.

Example 2. AstraZeneca

http://www.astrazeneca.com/mainnav1/about/csr/performance/c_performance/social.html

This example shows how performance targets might be met through comparison with and improvement on past performance levels within the company.

- Informs that 4 employees died (road and plane accidents)
- 2001 saw 448 accidents which resulted in injury to employees and contractors – the main causes of these are shown in a chart i.e. slips, trips, falls, vehicle accidents and manual handling.
- Reports that there is a deterioration in statistics but this is also due to the new reporting system.
- Training includes accident investigation training and driver training



> Key data	2000	2001	Change
AZ employees			
Number of accidents with injuries*	3.66 / million hrs	4.26 / million hrs	+16%
Number of accidents with injuries* and lost days	2.32 / million hrs	3.04 / million hrs	+31%
Vehicle accidents with injuries*	0.22 / million hrs	0.21 / million hrs	-5%
Contractors			
Number of accidents with injuries*	2.97 / million hrs	3.06 / million hrs	+3%

Other issues

- 364 cases of work-related ill health reported during 2001. This represents an increase of 9% in the reported rate of illness per million hours worked, when compared to year 2000 data. We believe this increase is largely due to a continued improvement in the quality of reporting information provided by our sites. This has been encouraged to establish a firm baseline from which to measure future improvement.
- Musculo-skeletal disorders and work-related stress illness account for 85% of the cases reported (see diagram). Of the musculoskeletal disorders, the majority affected the upper limb and were associated with computer work, packing and laboratory activities. Workload and home/work balance were the issues predominantly associated with work-related stress illness reports.
- Travel-related illnesses, which accounted for 9% of all illnesses reported during 2000, have been reduced to 1% in 2001.
- Dedicated intranet sites have been launched to identify and share best practice in the areas of ergonomic risk management and employee wellbeing. Local programmes aimed at promoting a healthy work/life balance are already in place

in some countries and have been well received. The Senior Executive Team (SET) has made it a requirement that each function puts in place improvement measures to address this issue. These initiatives are tied into an Awards scheme.

- Information on employee consultation, including employee survey

Example 3. Lattice Group

http://www.lattice-group.com/community_environment/health/index.html

This example shows how H&S performance might be achieved and raised through the setting of qualitative commitments and aims.

Our [HS&E policy](#) establishes the strategic aims against which the individual businesses are judged. Annual objectives are set and translated into targets for all our operations, and progress towards their achievement is reported quarterly to the Lattice Group Executive and Board.

Executive Director, John Wybrew, has Board level functional responsibility for Health and Safety. The Board and Executive specifically consider Health & Safety as a standing agenda item every quarter.

In addition the Board established a Safety Committee in 2001.

Group Objectives

The following sets the Group objectives for 2001, their status and the commitments that have been made for 2002 in the areas of HS&E management, health and safety.

Integration of the management of HS&E into our business will be progressed through:

Commitment for 2001	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that procedures are in place to assess HS&E risks, particularly risks associated with business changes, as part of the process for assessing all business risks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of management systems in Transco, Advantica, 186k and TLG Group completed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that individuals have HS&E targets which have equal importance to the achievement of business performance targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HS&E targets are now set for all Transco employees. • HSSE objectives & targets incorporated into performance management system & all Lattice Property Holdings staff appraisals. HS&E is the first item at meetings in many businesses

Elimination of all work-related injuries and promotion of a positive safety culture will be progressed through:

Commitment for 2001	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that performance reports contain measures that demonstrate that risks are being controlled (proactive measures) rather than measuring failures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive measures include: progress against safety training targets; progress against audit plans; implementation of new HS&E procedures; monitoring of a range of identified safety-critical measures.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that incident/injury/near-miss investigations determine root causes and that lessons are shared across the Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advantica established an Incident Review Group to identify lessons to be learned, common causes and trends. The lessons from incidents are communicated to staff and Group contacts Lattice Property Holdings provide feedback on incidents to staff via team business days, and Core Brief, as well as communication of lessons learned within contractor organisations. Transco has Groups reviewing incidents and injuries. Information on lessons learned and root causes is provided to all employees and, where appropriate, contractors via a monthly SHEEBA brief (Safety, Health, Environment & Engineering Briefing Advice). SHEEBA is copied to Group contacts to share learning
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Elimination of all work-related ill-health will be progressed through:

Commitment for 2001	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing strategies to assess and control work-related illness, using a risk-based approach to identify occupational ill-health risks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advantica initiated health surveillance for staff working with respiratory sensitisers, and incorporated into the Health & Safety Management System new Risk Control Requirements covering display screen equipment, manual handling and substances hazardous to health. Transco reviewed its health surveillance strategy and introduced lifestyle screening for all staff not requiring routine health surveillance. Plans were developed to increase the frequency of health surveillance from 3-yearly to annually.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing strategies to encourage a healthy balance between work and personal activities, with an emphasis on managing time spent on business travel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lattice Property Holdings implemented healthy restaurant menus Transco set targets to reduce time spent on business travel, and increased the availability of video-conferencing. Close monitoring of compliance with the Working Time Regulations continued

Commitments for 2002

HS&E Management

- Ensuring that governance procedures to assess HS&E risks associated with business changes are adequately implemented during business restructuring, including Boardroom decisions (in support of the HSC guidance on Directors responsibilities).
- Each business to select appropriate shortlisted Chairman's Awards and implement them within their business.
- Each business to develop processes for capturing contractor performance measures, in preparation for including robust and accurate contractor data in performance reports from 2003.

Safety

- Reviewing the arrangements for the maintenance of plant and equipment where their failure would lead to significant risks to the public.

- Develop and implement a strategy to reduce work-related injuries to the workforce and the public based on a review of common causes and trends (identified from the 2001 objective to investigate accidents to determine root causes).
- Each business to undertake a management systems audit of the contract management process for at least one major contract partner, from procurement to delivery.

Health

- Implement occupational health strategies developed as a result of the 2001 objectives.
- Develop performance measures to monitor improvements in employee occupationally-related health.