



IT – Emitter or Solution Provider?

Businesses need to focus less on how IT contributes to their environmental impact and more on how IT can help lessen the environmental impact of their supply chain operations. While making IT more green must remain a concern, there are areas where deploying more IT can significantly contribute to making an organization's supply chain activities more environmentally sustainable.

Senior managers need to be aware of what constitutes the environmental impact of the whole organization and to what extent IT can be a liability or an asset.

Firstly it is important to define the impact of IT itself which includes electronic waste and asset disposition; consumption of non-renewable resources such as energy in the data centre for desktop computers, printers and networking gear; the energy embodied in the full life cycle of each asset; and user behavior.

What is the impact of IT on the supply chain, regardless of whether the end result is a product, service or combination of the two. This includes the environmental effects of material and energy consumption; emissions or waste from manufacturing and all operational processes; paper consumption for administrative purposes; lighting, heating, and cooling for buildings; workforce commuting and mobility; vehicle fleets; supply chain impact; waste disposal. Technology should be utilized to provide as much actionable information as possible and provide the highest visibility possible throughout the supply chain

What is the environmental impact for the delivery phase of the organizations products and services - that is, the direct impacts of procurement and use of products and services.

Different industries will experience the degrees of impact in different ways and this will determine how an organization defines the environmental value of IT. In terms of the supply chain it is important to measure all activities from design through to distribution and recycling. In order to do this various technologies will need to be deployed to provide as much visibility as possible at all stages in the supply chain. The Carbon Council, with the assistance of it's Partners, will be addressing this field extensively and evaluate exactly which technologies can have the most positive impact in terms of carbon reduction.