

## Human rights

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**better**  
world



## Human rights

We base all relevant BT policies and procedures on the principles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Our Business Principles include a commitment to protect and enhance the human dignity of every BT employee, and everyone who has dealings with us.

BT has the potential to affect human rights through:

- The way our products and services are used by others (including issues around freedom of expression, privacy and content standards)
- Working conditions in our supply chain.

Here we describe our approach to human rights issues, under these headings:

- Human rights principles
- Human rights and the ICT sector
- Implementing human rights
- Supply chain and human rights
- Privacy
- Freedom of expression.

## Human rights principles

We use the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) to ensure all our policies enhance human dignity. But new challenges and opportunities arise as the business and external environment changes, so we can't rely on policy alone to make sure we address human rights issues properly.

All our employees have access to the Universal Declaration on our intranet. An outline of our approach to human rights is included in the guidance document accompanying our statement of business practice – The Way We Work. Within our global operations briefing on this statement is included in the induction programme for all new employees, including those from our recently acquired businesses.

We are in contact with expert groups and information sources that can help us implement our commitment to human dignity and improve our procedures.

For example:

- We are a signatory to the UN's Global Compact, an initiative that strives to motivate business and industry around ten principles on corruption, environment, labour and human rights. We report on our progress and performance against the Global Compact principles - see [Global Compact Site Index](#).
- Through the [Global e-Sustainability Initiative](#) (GeSI) we engage with ICT service providers and suppliers, and alliances focused on improving supply-chain working conditions, such as the Ethical Trading Initiative.

## Human rights and the ICT sector

Access to information and communications technology (ICT) can help to promote freedom of expression and be a source of openness in otherwise closed societies. ICT enables information to be disseminated quickly, efficiently and safely and can be invaluable to organisations promoting human rights. New technology also creates new challenges relating to free expression – for example misuse of the internet. This is addressed in an independently written Hot Topic: [Abuse of the Internet](#).



## Implementing human rights

The best way to implement our commitment to human dignity is to enhance the positive impact of our business on human rights.

Our website 'CSR Countries at Risk' gives BT employees information on 158 countries and the risks associated with doing business in them. It includes an assessment of each country's performance on human rights issues and any reported human rights abuses.

In the 2006 financial year:

- Questions on human rights risks were added to our due diligence process used when BT acquires new businesses
- Capability statements supporting our business bids included information on BT's approach to CSR and human rights.

## Supply chain and human rights

We want working conditions in our supply chain to meet the standards of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and the [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\) Conventions](#). We believe this is the right thing to do. As such, working conditions in our supply chain has been identified as one of BT's seven CSR risks.

See more at [Human rights and suppliers](#).

## Privacy

Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

*"No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor attacks upon his honour and reputation."*

Privacy is not a new challenge. But developments in ICT, such as the ability to tailor services to meet personal needs, have created fresh dilemmas. We have to find a balance between offering tailored customer service and protecting customers' privacy.

## Customer privacy

There are important data protection laws in the UK and internationally. We always aim to meet these laws and take all reasonable care to prevent any unauthorised access to personal data. Our intent is that personal information is only collected with consent and that we collect no more than we need for the stated purpose.

A typical example where we hold personal information would be customers using the BT website to manage their BT account. To do this they first have to register and provide some personal information. How BT deals with this information is covered by our [privacy policy](#). This informs customers of what we will use the information for and describes where they might have a choice – for example to elect not to receive BT marketing materials.

In the 2006 financial year we launched [BT Privacy](#) bringing together a range of free and paid for customer privacy protection services. These include:

- Blocking unwanted sales calls through the [UK Telephone preference service](#)
- BT's Caller Display services which display the number of the person calling.
- Advanced calling features including 'choose to refuse' that blocks calls from certain numbers.



## Employee privacy

We have several policies governing the use of BT telephones, email and the internet by employees. All employees have been made aware that email and internet access may be monitored and that certain types of message and use of the internet are considered inappropriate while at work. This is common business practice. BT does allow reasonable use of personal email.

We have drafted guidelines to help employees assess privacy related risks when developing, marketing or selling new wave products and solutions. Examples include the technology and process of radio frequency identification tagging and the location registration of mobile communication devices. The guidelines will be communicated to employees during the 2007 financial year.

## Privacy and new technology

We have identified privacy as one of our seven key CSR risks. We address trade-offs between advancements in networked technologies and the risks to personal privacy rights in our Hot Topic - [Privacy in the Digital Networked Economy](#).

## Freedom of expression

Article 19 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) states:

*"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."*

Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right and a critical means of promoting all human rights. Technological advances are creating new issues around freedom of expression. A key challenge is to balance the right to freedom of expression with the need to protect children on-line.

BT is a board member of the [Internet Content Rating Association](#) (ICRA) that aims to protect children from potentially harmful material without undermining free speech online. It enables parents to set their browser to reject access to certain types of content. Content is rated by the providers not the ICRA.

[BT Safe Surf](#) gives detailed information for parents and user-friendly training for children.

BT is becoming a content provider through new services such as TV to mobile and video on demand over broadband. We must give customers control over the content they view and tools to help protect children from viewing inappropriate content. BT acts against illegal content.

We have published an independently written Hot Topic on [Abuse of the Internet](#).

## Adult and illegal content

BT acts on complaints about content hosted on our servers. We sit on the funding council of the [UK Internet Watch Foundation](#), which notifies us of illegal content stored on our servers and web space.

We contribute to the work of the [Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services](#) (ICSTIS). ICSTIS registers certain types of phone services in the UK, such as dating services, betting, fundraising and services of a sexual nature. This safeguards the right to freedom of expression while ensuring protection of users, legality and quality.

BT's 'CleanFeed' software filtering system automatically blocks access to child abuse websites blacklisted by the Internet Watch Foundation. This includes sites considered 'illegal to view' under the 1978 Child Protection Act. On average there are currently 45,000 attempts to access barred URLs each day.



We are giving away the blueprint for CleanFeed, under non-disclosure agreements, to other internet service providers interested in adopting it.

We have taste and decency guidelines for employees dealing with potential partners to help them understand which areas of business are and aren't acceptable to BT. We are revising the guidelines to include controls for adult content.

## Human rights Targets

Start Date	End Date	Description	Update	Target Status
April 2006	March 2007	Following analysis of the CSR best practice event, BT will initiate follow through with 5 participating suppliers.		New
April 2006	March 2007	BT will develop a coach approach on labour standards and engage with 2 suppliers.		New
April 2006	March 2007	BT will take follow-up action within 3 months for all suppliers who have been identified as requiring continuous improvement as a result of completing our CSR questionnaires.		New
April 2006	March 2007	BT will take 100% follow-up within 3 months for all suppliers identified as high or medium risk following a GS18 Sourcing with Human Dignity risk assessment.		New
April 2005	March 2006	There will be evidence of follow up action taken within 3 months with all suppliers who have been identified as requiring continuous improvement as a result of completing our CSR questionnaires.	All questionnaires received had follow up action taken within the specified timescales.	Completed
April 2005	March 2006	We will hold a workshop with our Tier One Suppliers to share best practice and drive progress towards our CSR standards.	The event took place on 27th February.	Completed
April 2005	March 2006	We will coach and share best practice with a Tier One Supplier by effecting a joint CSR assessment within the supply chain.	A joint CSR assessment took place in Mexico in August 2005.	Completed
April 2005	March 2006	There will be evidence that action within three months has been conducted with all contracts identified as high or medium risk following a GS18 Sourcing with Human Dignity risk assessment.	All questionnaires received had follow up action taken within the specified timescales.	Completed

## Supply chain and human rights Targets

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