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# Controlling Environmental Cost in the Production Industry



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Discovering sustainable ways to protect our natural environment, whilst not hindering innovation or our way of life, has been an important ongoing discussion over the last decade. Urban society consumes a lot of natural resources and so it has become more important to maintain the three main elements of sustainable practice: economic development, social development and environmental protection.

## Sustainability in Film and Television Production

Film and television production presents a worldwide platform to campaign for better sustainable practices, through its own efforts behind camera as well as the message portrayed on screen. With the need and desire to maintain more eco-friendly production processes, certain organisations, including several of the major studios have made an effort to set in place specific requirements in order to meet sustainability standards.

The BSI'S BS8909 standard was introduced in 2011 for sustainable management of production, and uses the World Commission on Environment and Development's most widely adopted definition. This states that 'sustainable development is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

This standard helps filmmakers and production companies understand their impact on the environment from production through to home entertainment. A production company can showcase its compliance with the standard by working to maintain the three main elements of sustainability:

### Environmental

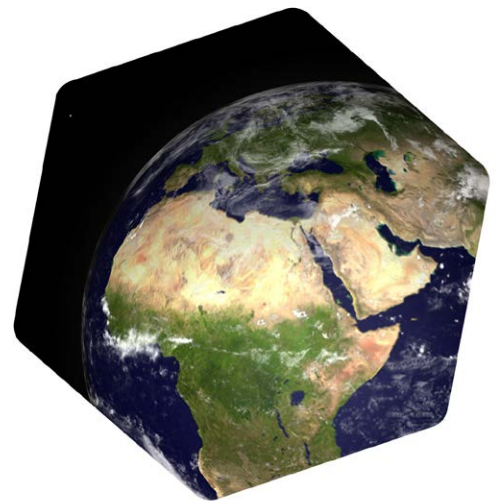
Environmental sustainability is the continual discovery and maintenance of renewable resources, which in turn reduces harmful carbon emissions polluting the atmosphere. There are four main areas that productions should attempt to address in order to help protect our environment: recycling, reducing the use of paper and energy, moving to renewable sources and travel. Improved route planning, encouraging people to travel together or by public transport and the use of vehicles with lower CO2 ratings all work to reduce carbon emissions produced by wasteful travel arrangements.

### Social

Prior to filming production companies should try to establish clear guidelines to reduce the impact on local communities. This includes notifying communities early about parking arrangements, catering, noise and ensuring that child actors are coping with the busy working environment and chaperoned at all times.

### Economic

Sourcing local props, extras and catering and compensating locals properly can all help communities benefit from the production.



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## Raising Awareness

Sustainability has been an increasingly popular topic at industry events, including past Sargent-Disc Filmmakers' Forums. At last year's event, Sargent-Disc's Laurence Sargent, along with Jeremy Mathieu (Sustainable Production Advisor, BBC) and Anna Ringuet (Eco Supervisor, Star Wars: Episode VII - The Force Awakens) hosted the Greening Your Film boardroom session, powered by Albert+ at the 2015 Sargent-Disc BAFTA Filmmakers' Forum.

The speakers pointed out three significant areas to observe when engaging in sustainable production - leadership, communication and responsibilities. The roundtable session was a fantastic opportunity to discuss common pitfalls such as attitudinal change, and opportunities to successfully incorporate eco-friendly processes and content into production. These included subliminal messaging within the editorial content and simple ideas such as reducing paper on production to reduce a film's carbon footprint.

The Production Guild of Great Britain also held a session at the 2014 Forum entitled 'How to Budget and Schedule Your Film', during which Clare Cahill proposed allocating water bottles to the production team as a means of recycling materials.

## Industry Efforts

Several key industry organisations have already started the transition towards supporting and delivering more sustainable production including, Pinewood Studios, NBC Universal, The British Film Institute (BFI) and Sargent-Disc

### The British Film Institute - Greening Film

The British Film Institute (BFI) has developed a sustainability strategy for the film sector. This strategy works in conjunction with the BS8909 standard, and works to improve their own impact on the environment alongside encouraging others to do the same.

These targets have so far been connected to major emitters of carbon emissions such as:

- **Energy** - the BFI continually assesses its energy output at all sites in order to discover areas with potential for improvement
- **Travel** - Improvements are currently being made to their ride-to-work programme at Stephen Street head office and the Conservation Centre at Berkhamsted
- **Waste** - the BFI waste management contract is currently under inspection to improve sustainability across the board

Perhaps the BFI's most important role is as an environmental advocate to the film industry. The BFI is driven by its ambition to increase awareness of best practice in sustainability through the Greening Film website, holding industry events and providing a multitude of invaluable resources on its website.



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The BAFTA albert consortium, consisting of 13 of the largest UK broadcasters and production companies, supports albert in its mission to address issues of environmental sustainability by encouraging best practice across the industry. Now representing an industry movement, albert started as a carbon calculator. In order to track progress carbon counting remains a core activity, but this is now complimented by training, production certification and communication.

## Sargent-Disc - Digital Production Office®

Sargent-Disc's new **Digital Production Office®** initiative aims to increase awareness of sustainable production. It brings together a selection of digital products and services for the entertainment industry, from Sargent-Disc, its partners, and affiliate Entertainment Partners. Designed to improve your workflow and ensure productions run smoothly and efficiently.

Sargent-Disc's latest product, Digital Purchase Order, is part of the Digital Production Office® initiative. It simplifies the traditional purchase order workflow with a fully integrated process; removing the need for multiple emails and manual circulation. More importantly, it allows users not only to approve costs before payments are made, but also to reduce their paper consumption through digital purchase orders. We worked with the albert+ Calculator, to find out how much of a difference it makes.

The Albert+ Calculator measured the carbon footprint of each paper purchase order (PO) as 49 grams CO<sub>2</sub>e per 5 leaf PO. With this in mind, we can estimate that a production using 6,000 POs would save 0.2 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> using Digital Purchase Order.

To find out more about Digital Purchase Order, [click here](#).

## Pinewood Studios

Sargent-Disc is based at **Pinewood Studios**, who take pride in implementing and encouraging more sustainable production processes.

Their efforts to reduce their carbon footprint include the addition of solar panels to several stages on the lot, creating energy from waste and recycling materials such as printer cartridges and batteries. The Studios have invested in alternative methods of renewable energy, including wind turbines installed at their site in Wales, which provide 98% of energy.

A key element of Pinewood's drive toward sustainable filmmaking is its dedication to educating staff, tenants and guests on more eco-friendly practices. These include:

- Monthly 'Bikers Breakfast' - free breakfast to anyone who cycles to work
- Arrival of eco-friendly staff cars and bikes (electric car charge points are situated around the lot)
- Shuttle Bus services for production crew and onsite employees - Slough, Uxbridge and Gerrards Cross.

*'At Pinewood we have a number of sustainability projects on the go at the moment and strive to minimise our impact on the wider environment. We have a sophisticated energy monitoring system which is invaluable to us because in our opinion 'if you can't measure you can't manage'. We have in recent years become a 'zero waste to landfill' facility and continue to help and encourage our clients to be as sustainable as possible.'*

Hannah Gonsalves, Sustainability Coordinator, Pinewood Studios Group.



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## NBCUniversal - Green is Universal:

NBCUniversal created the 'Green is Universal' initiative to convert their environmental commitment into actions. It unveils how they work to incorporate sustainable practices across the entire spectrum of the company.

Continually striving to discover new methods of saving energy, educating consumers via themed productions or minimise the impact their products have on the environment, NBCUniversal is a great example of an entertainment company leading the way in encouraging sustainable production. Efforts whilst on production include reusing old set flats, utilising sustainable, quick-growth materials such as bamboo and donating leftover food, clothing and furniture to local people in need.

Behind the camera, NBCUniversal engages their staff by implementing certain requirements such as an orientation process for new employees on the company's environmental commitments 'green' volunteer days throughout the year. Employees are also recognised for their efforts through Eco GEM (Going the Extra Mile) Awards which highlight particular projects that have increased sustainability at NBCUniversal.

## How Can Sargent-Disc Help?

Significant changes have already been actioned to promote better sustainable practice across the film and television industry, as can be seen by the above initiatives, however it is important that the current issues surrounding sustainability are better understood.

Sargent-Disc hopes to raise awareness of these issues through its new initiative, the Digital Production Office<sup>®</sup>, and the products encompassed within it.

For more information on our paperless solutions for production, contact Sargent-Disc on 01753 630300 or visit the **Digital Production Office<sup>®</sup>** website.

### Useful Links:

To find out more about the sustainability standards and initiatives mentioned above, click the links:

[The BAFTA albert consortium - albert+](#)

[NBCUniversal - Green is Universal](#)

[TBFi - Greening Film](#)

[BS8909](#)



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