

Sustaining the Information Society: New (and Old) Conflicts in the Knowledge Economy¹
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This presentation reports on the movement for sustainability in the information environment. The wealth of nations today relies on intangible products: information goods or "intellectual property" such as ideas, symbols, and data. IP-based industries are growing in their share of America's economic output, outpacing fields such as manufacturing and resource extraction. While those latter industries have well-documented sustainability challenges, the rise of the information society has been met with a growth of interest in sustainable management of information goods and resources. Sustainable business models, legal and political regimes, and institutional, community, and individual practices are now the subject of study and debate worldwide. Academic communities are taking particular interest as they strive to fulfill their mission to serve the public good through efforts such as Yale's Access to Knowledge project and MIT's OpenCourseWare initiative.

This presentation examines current controversies and efforts in sustainable management of the information environment and their effects on economic and cultural development, with particular emphasis on university communities. Drawing parallels to other aspects of sustainability, the presentation aims to build a dialogue between disciplines and argues for inclusion of the information environment in sustainability discussions.

1 Abstract and slides available at: <http://www.gavinbaker.com/conferences/sustainability/>

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