# How responsible should/could an apparel designer be?

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This position paper asks the following questions: what tools are out there for the apparel designer to inform them of the sustainability issues (of people, profit and planet) inherent in their choice of fabrics, location and type of manufacturing processes and are they effective? Are they, indeed tools designed for the designer? As ecology, sustainability and responsible design are increasingly becoming market driven; we raise the issue of how the industry can prevent 'greenwashing' and develop more sincere approaches to designing sustainably (Farrer and Fraser, 2009).

The paper will highlight the types of tools that are easily accessible and outline the types of information available, some may be web based, and others may be business processes or government information. Consideration of factors that can influence the uptake of such resources include: identify to what extent online resources are utilised by designers to inform choice of design, fabric and trim selection; whether online databases contain easily accessible and informative information; how these information resources are promoted; is the content pitched at the appropriate level to appeal to creative practitioners. It also intends to consider where the impetus lies to utilise these tools, with the designer or their company/contractor, for example in instances where they work within a large company, the level to which their employers endorse the information.

The paper will demonstrate ways that significant investment has been made by government agencies, non-government organisations and private industry to devise tools, services and processes to inform design choices. Also it will question if/how these resources present a viable and sustainable solution that will inform innovation.