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## BUSINESS EDUCATION

# Corporate responsibility goes computer gaming

**Report** Kate Marshall

Computer games aren't normally associated with the serious world of corporate social responsibility.

But about 130 executives were divided into highly competitive teams this week to take part in a simulation workshop run by Canadian firm ExperiencePoint to highlight the ethical dilemmas, budgetary challenges and tricky tactics many organisations have to grapple with when they decide to bite the bullet and adopt CSR.

ExperiencePoint, which develops simulation learning tools, has drawn on the experience of co-founder James Chisholm in researching business-school case studies for the Canadian manufacturing competitiveness project to put together an interactive video game, ExperienceCSR.

"The game works by combining elements of gaming, like competition and tight time pressure, with a learning experience that ups people's emotional engagement," he said.

Academics at the University of Toronto's St Michael's College provided the content. In return, they are paid a modest royalty and are able to block purchase and resell LearningPoint CSR product licences to other users at a higher price.

One of the participants, the acting executive director of the global sustainability institute at RMIT University, Caroline Bayliss, said that the most valuable lesson for the group was seeing how results depended on choices made as a team.

Ms Bayliss is convinced that business students would find ExperienceCSR useful.

"I'm keen to explore with colleagues at RMIT Business whether [the game] might be valuable as an adjunct to the curriculum," she said.

"I have issues with the methodology and some of the underlying assumptions, but what the exercise does is generate a team approach to analysing the relative position of an organisation, engaging with stakeholders and working across the

organisation to devise and implement a CSR strategy.

"It's also a good reality check - you realise how much front-end work is needed to get the 'buy-in' of individuals and the organisation as a whole so you give them the right message."

Another participant was Simon Robinson, the chief executive of Melbourne Cares, a not-for-profit offshoot of the influential Committee for Melbourne. "The workshop was a really excellent tool for an organisation like ours," he said.