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Ethical Consumer screening of MessageLabs Group Ltd  
February 2006

MessageLabs Group Ltd  
1240 Lansdowne Court, Gloucester Business Park, Gloucester, GL3 4AB  
Ethiscore 10.5

MessageLabs is an international company providing a range of IT services to the commercial sector, primarily focusing on applications which block spam, viruses and other unwanted email. Ethical Consumer's database criticisms for the company are given below. The only other controversies or similar information that could be found by ECRA in February 2006 were allegations that MessageLabs had improperly used its position of screening company emails to gather material later used for marketing, and that it had made excessive claims about the value of its products relative to its competitors. Neither of these allegations could be confirmed.

14% of MessageLabs Group was found to be owned by US investment company Madison Dearborn Partners. A selection of references from this company are given below those for MessageLabs. Madison Dearborn was found to own or have holdings in a number of companies with considerable criticisms in various EC categories, including unsustainable logging of ecologically valuable forests, factory farming of meat, oil exploration, involvement in human and land rights abuses, and membership of international free trade lobby groups.

## Environment

### Environmental Reporting

#### Worst ECRA rating for environmental reporting (2006)

A search was made by ECRA in February 2006 on the company website [www.messagelabsgroup.com](http://www.messagelabsgroup.com) for a copy of the MessageLabs environmental policy or report. No such document, or any mention of one, could be found. (ref: 1)

## People

### Oppressive Regimes

#### Operations in oppressive regimes and tax havens (2006)



According to the Hoovers.com factsheet on Messagelabs Ltd, viewed by ECRA in February 2006, Messagelabs had operations in the following countries regarded by ECRA as having oppressive regimes: China (Hong Kong) and the USA. It also listed operations in Hong Kong and Singapore, both territories regarded by ECRA as being tax havens. (ref: 2)

#### Armaments

Services to arms company (2006)

According to the company website [www.messagelabs.com](http://www.messagelabs.com), viewed by ECRA in February 2006, MessageLabs provided IT services to an aviation company which made military planes, including communications services to sales staff engaged in marketing such products. (ref: 1)

#### Extras

##### Political Activities

Political trip sponsorship (2005)

According to a press release dated 8th February 2005, found on the Interregnum company website [www.interregnum.com](http://www.interregnum.com), Interregnum and MessageLabs had co-sponsored a trip by British MPs in 2005 to Washington to discuss US-UK work on internet security. (ref: 3)

##### Alert

(See also 'Operations in oppressive regimes and tax havens' in Oppressive Regimes above.)

Subsidiary in one tax haven (2004)

According to the MessageLabs Group annual report for 2004, the Group owned a subsidiary in Hong Kong, a territory regarded by ECRA at that time as a tax haven. (ref: 4)

#### References

1 - MessageLabs Group Ltd Corporate Communications: [www.messagelabs.com](http://www.messagelabs.com) (2 February 2006) (283350)

2 - Hoovers Online [www.hoovers.com](http://www.hoovers.com): Messagelabs factsheet (2 February 2006) (283321)

3 - Interregnum plc Corporate Communications: Interregnum sponsors security delegation to Washington (8 February 2005) (283357)

4 - MessageLabs Group Ltd Corporate Communications: Annual Report 2004 (2005) (283333)

#### References for Madison Dearborn Partners

February 2006

##### Madison Dearborn Partners

3 First National Plaza, Suite 3800, Chicago, Illinois 60602, USA

#### Environment

##### Environmental Reporting

Worst ECRA rating for environmental reporting (2006)

A search was made by ECRA in February 2006 on the company website [www.mdcp.com](http://www.mdcp.com) for a copy of the Madison Dearborn Partners' environmental policy or report. No such document, or any mention of one, could be found. (ref: 1)

##### Pollution

Penalties for increased air pollution (2002)

According to the May 2002 issue of The Ecologist, Boise Cascade had agreed, in March 2002, to reduce up to 95 per cent of the harmful emissions from its eight plywood and particle plants, and to pay US\$ 4.35 million in penalties. It said the concessions had followed federal allegations that Boise had modified and expanded its panel board operations over the previous two decades without installing proper air pollution control equipment. (ref: 2)

## Environment Other

### Aguas Blancas Massacre (February 2004)

The Ecologist reported in February 2004 on Boise Cascade logging in the south-west Mexican state of Guerrero. The over-cutting of trees in the state led to springs drying up and communities without water. "When the locals protested 17 were murdered and another 20 wounded in the now infamous Aguas Blancas Massacre." Although Boise Cascade were forced to leave the region as no-one would sell them trees for their mill, an activist Rodolpho Montiel who was mobilising communities against logging, was arrested, tortured and sentenced to 8 years for spurious drugs and weapons services. "As soon as Montiel was jailed, Boise Cascade's former partners attempted to begin logging again." (ref: 3)

### Trying to close down environmental groups (2001)

In September 2001 Ecologist ran a piece which was critical of Boise Cascade's activities with relation to the Rainforest Action Network (RAN). While one group - backed according to the Ecologist by timber, tobacco and oil money - was lobbying to revoke RAN's non-profit status, Boise Cascade was accused by the Ecologist of "aggressively targeting RAN's funders with threatening letters". Both were said to be working with the "anti-green Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise". (ref: 4)

### Investments in environmentally damaging companies (2006)

According to the Madison Dearborn company website [ww.mdcp.com](http://www.mdcp.com), viewed by ECRA in February 2006, the company had investments in companies which carried out environmentally destructive practices. This was said to include:

- Hines Horticulture, described as "the largest North American producer of sphagnum peat moss"
- Buckeye Cellulose (trading as Buckeye Technologies), which was said to produce a range of wood pulp products not specified as being from sustainable sources. (ref: 1)

## Animals

### Factory farming

#### Sale of factory farmed meat (2006)

According to the Madison Dearborn company website, [www.mdcp.com](http://www.mdcp.com), viewed by ECRA in February 2006, Carrols Holding Corp was the largest independent Burger King franchisee in the USA and also ran a chain of restaurants called Pollo [chicken] Tropical. As such, it was assumed to sell meat products not coming from free range or organic sources. (ref: 1)

## Extras

### Political Activities

#### Membership of one international lobby group (2003)

On 27 January 2003 the website of the free trade lobby group, the European Roundtable of Industrialists (ERT), listed a management representative of Jefferson Smurfit as being a member. The exact page location was <http://www.ert.be/pc/pcb/encb01.htm>. Elsewhere on its website on the same date, at <http://www.ert.be/pc/enc01.htm>, the ERT said "The ERT believes that the interests of European industry, its customers and the communities in which it operates, will be best served by promoting competition and competitiveness on a European scale. Europeans can only solve their problems by closer co-operation, by developing the Single Market into a steadily more integrated economic system, and by drawing on the full potential of the single market to stimulate investment, to increase production and to create new jobs." (ref: 5)

### Alert

#### Alleged persecution of Mexican activists (2005)

According to the Winter 2005 issue of What on Earth, since 1998 peasant communities in the Sierra de Petalan area of Mexico had been campaigning against Boise Cascade logging in their area, as well as exploration by oil companies. In 2000, two activists were said to have been arrested for murder, tortured to obtain confessions and convicted in an allegedly rigged trial. Opposition from environmentalists worldwide was said to have resulted in the activists' release. In 2004 another activist was also arrested for the same

murder and imprisoned, finally being released in 2005 after further protests from the worldwide environmental community.

(ref: 6)

(See also 'Aguas Blancas Massacre' in Environment Other above.)

#### References

- 1 - Madison Dearborn Partners Corporate Communications: [www.mdcp.com](http://www.mdcp.com) (2 February 2006) (283378)
- 2 - Ecologist, The: Vol 32 no 4 (1 May 2002) (3334)
- 3 - Ecologist, The: February 2004 (216679)
- 4 - Ecologist, The: 31/7 (9 January 2001) (3329)
- 5 - European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT) [www.ert.be](http://www.ert.be): [www.ert.be/pc/pcb/encb01.htm](http://www.ert.be/pc/pcb/encb01.htm) (27 January 2003) (12333)
- 6 - What on Earth: Issue 43 (winter 2005) (November 2005) (279067)

#### DISCLAIMER

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