

DISCUSSION

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John Rumble: Are users willing to pay the **real** costs to meet the requirements for materials information, especially on user experience and modern materials?

Kamal Hossain, author's response: In the DTI survey this question was not specifically addressed. However, I expect that many of the SMEs questioned will be unwilling to pay for the true cost of such information. The position might be different for larger companies involved with significant developments and manufacturing of high technology products. Pump-firing type of support may be needed from Government to help the SMEs, but one has to make a case showing that market imperfections exist.

Dr N Swindells: The question of whether people will pay adequately for materials information depends for its answer on the existence of a market. At the present time the market is not adequately established and yet one is necessary to underpin the financial basis of this sector. Government support can never be sufficient. The requirement to foster the market is currently the concern of CEC, Directorate General XIII, in its proposals for the new programme IMPACT 2.