



Partnership for  
Education and research about  
Responsible  
Living



# Beyond Consumption

## Pathways to Responsible Living

2nd PERL International Conference  
Technische Universität Berlin  
19–20 March 2012

## Book of Abstracts



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF CHILDREN,  
EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION



Hedmark University College



For more see [www.perlprojects.org](http://www.perlprojects.org)

Following the six international conferences by the

## **The role of IT and social media in the process of transition to responsible and sustainable living**

*Irina Liokumoviča — Latvia*

Currently new digital IT and social media have a tremendous impact on our own life and the world around us. It is a powerful tool of persuasion, provoking action and influencing public opinion. The main challenges are to explore how IT and social media affect the responsibilities of consumers and citizens as individuals and community members and how we can become responsible consumer citizens and benefit the society. The study addresses globalized social media as a platform and a tool for the engagement of people. It focuses on modern digital social media applications and platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and mobile phones that can empower the public to choose responsible and sustainable lifestyles. The paper examines two kinds of civic participation: 1. participation inspired by individuals; 2. participation instigated by institutions (e.g., governments, corporations, NGO, etc.). It raises the critical issue whether the participation in the “virtual world” via blogging, online petitions and texting micropayment charity can lead to greater consumers and citizens participation in the actual world and make people more socially responsible. The public engagement in policy debates is illustrated on the activities of self-government in the context of Latvia, in particular Riga City Council. A successful collaboration between municipality and neighborhood inhabitants in the city environment protection within Riga neighborhood development project is highlighted. The activities of Riga City Council on the way to sustainable living are examined through the prism of social media from economical, environmental and social perspectives (e.g., the improvement of energy consumption efficiency in Riga residential buildings, waste water management, environment protection, etc.). In this context, a comparative analysis of the situation in other Baltic States (i.e., Estonia and Lithuania) is carried out. The world has entered a period of transition and there will be many opportunities to encourage and channel a positive change.