

# Sustainability

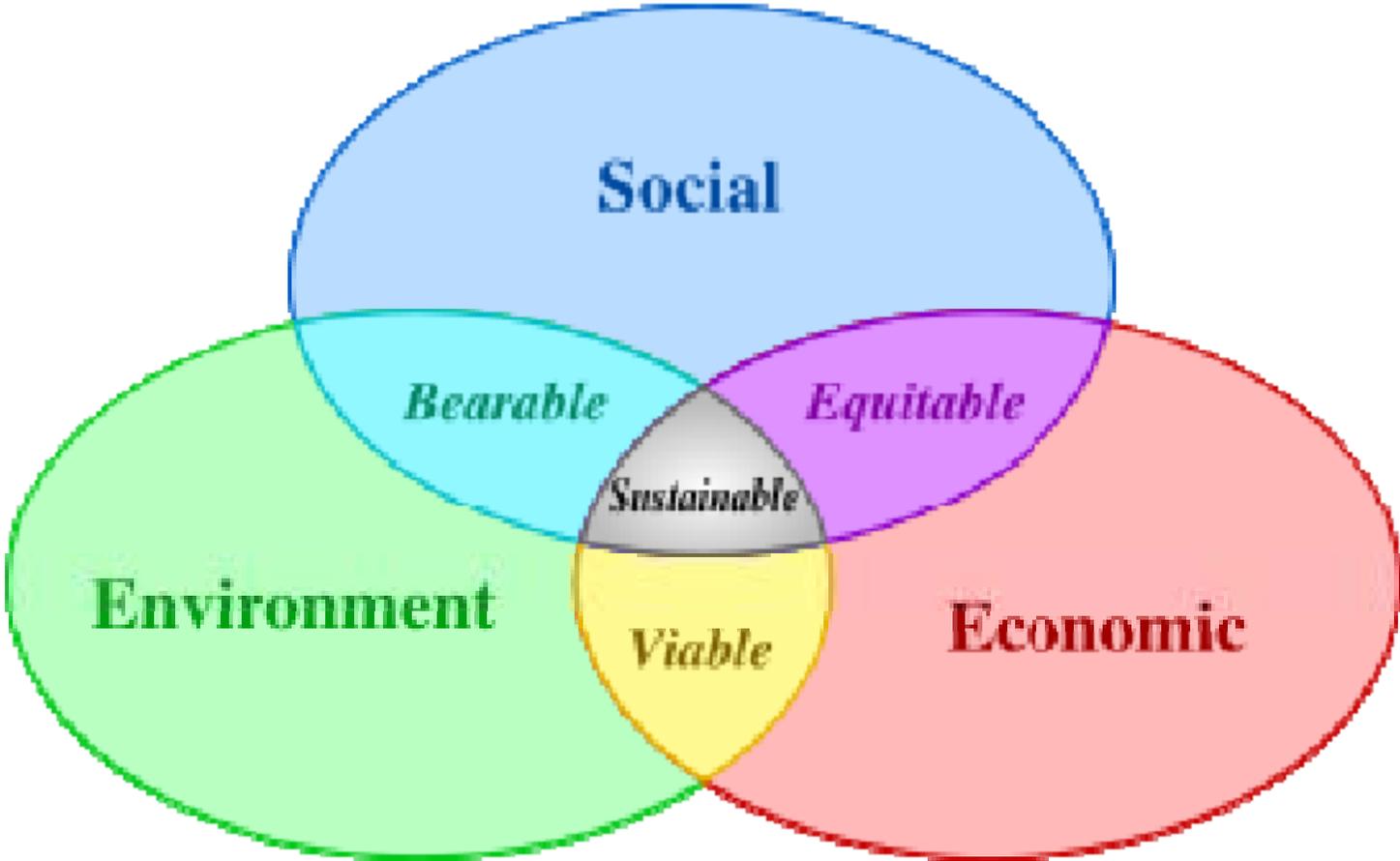
*What is it, anyway?*



Sustainability is often defined as:

*“[working] to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”*

# Sustainability



# Consumerism, Consumption, and the Environment



Live Green in Plano Volunteer Class, June 2007

Environmentalists often site three main causes of pollution...

**Population,  
Technology,  
& Consumerism**

“Wow, **consumerism**... what’s that!”

# “Consumption, Over-consumption, and Consumerism, oh my!”

## Consumption:

*Buying/using what you need.*



## Over-Consumption:

*Buying/using more than you need.*

## Consumerism: \$\$\$ =



*Believing that happiness is based on what you consume*

# Culture of Consumerism, culture of waste

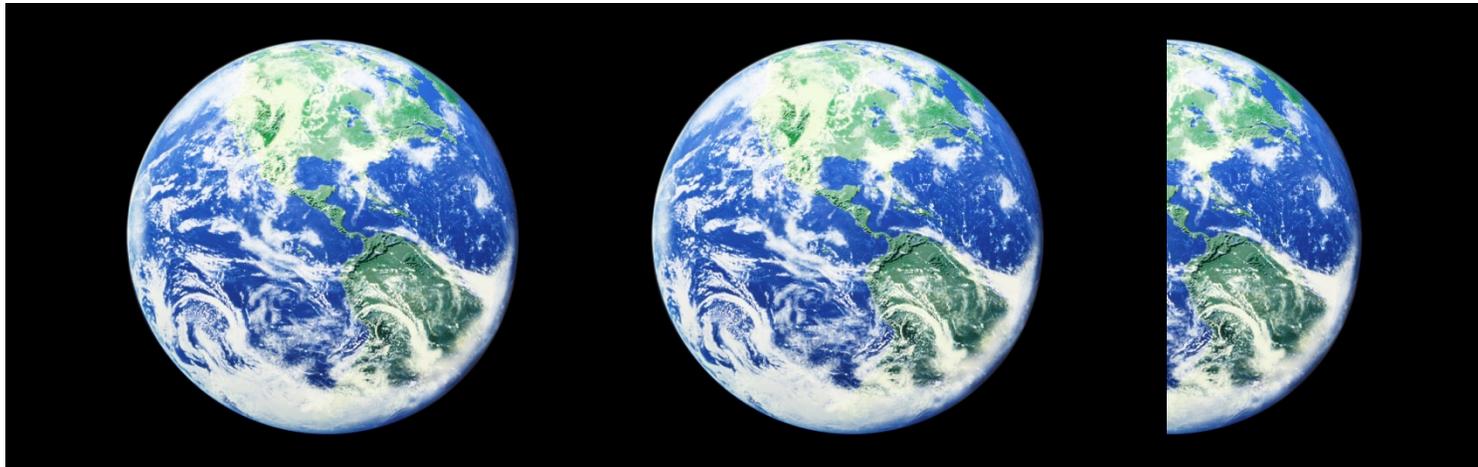
Americans...

I  stuff

- Make up 5% of the world's population
- Use up nearly 1/3 of the world's resources
- Produce half of the world's hazardous waste

# The Human Impact

- Humanity currently uses 130% of what the Earth can produce in a year.
- By 2050, on our current path we will likely be using 250% of what the earth can produce in a year.



*What resources and materials went into making this item?*



**“To buy or not to buy...  
*that* is the question.”**

There are people in this world whose sole responsibility/occupation is to convince you that you NEED items that you cannot afford, will never use, and which hold no power to truly enhance the quality of your life.

**THE CHALLENGE:**

Can you live without the following products (that you never knew you needed)...?

# The “Food Cooler”



# The “Shoe Umbrellas”



# The “Cold Stopper”



# “Television”



# TV fast facts

The Average American household has 2.24 TVs

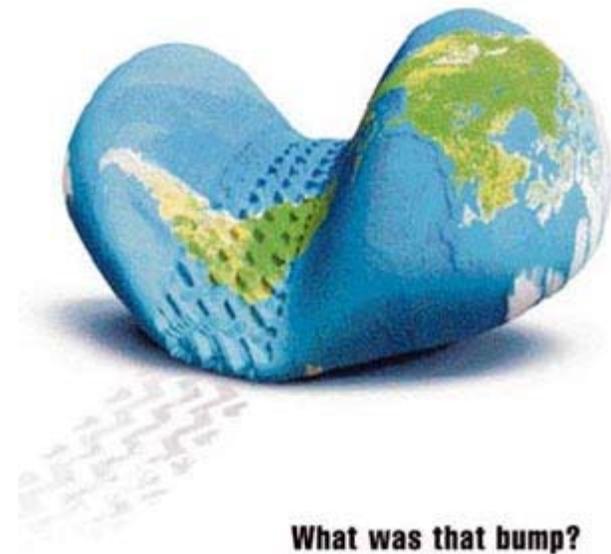
66% of American homes have 3 or more TVs

The Average American will watch 22,000,000  
TV commercials in his/her lifetime.

# The Environmental and Social Impacts of Consumerism

Production, Processing and Consumption requires:

- Extraction of Natural Resources
- Creation of factories, often “sweatshops”
- Production of toxic byproducts
- The products themselves often create pollution and waste



**What was that bump?**

# A note about E-waste:

“Holy motherboard, Batman”



Electronic waste is often exported to under-developed nations where it is stripped for valuable parts and the carcasses are then dumped in empty fields and streams, creating more pollution.

Wow! That's terrible,  
but what can I do?!



Well, don't just run out and start buying everything with a  symbol on it.

Watch out for “greenwashing”

And let's ask the question...

Can we Shop our way to a  
**greener** world?

# “Greenwashing”

The “Green Movement” has created a multi-billion dollar industry...

Corporations would like to get a piece of this green action, right?

Marketing items as “green” is a great way to get even conscientious consumers to consume more.

## **List of Activities that are not consumption**

- Extinguishing a fire
- Playing in a band
- Falling in love
- Taking a photograph
- Gardening
- Going window shopping
- Having an argument

# Brian's list of more direct actions to thwart consumerism

- Think about it, discuss it, learn more...
- Try a “buy nothing” day
- “Close the Loop” – Reduce, Reuse, Rebuy
- Buy locally produced items!
- Check out “New Dream’s” Consumer Questions
- Develop your own list of questions to determine whether to buy or not to buy.

# “Eco-footprint”

What's your Ecological Footprint?

**Questions?**