

Communications Policy and Information Technology - Promises, Problems, Prospects

New technologies, although developed with optimism, often fall short of their predicted potential and create new problems. Communications technologies are no different. Their utopian proponents claim that universal access to advanced communications technologies can help to feed the hungry, cure the sick, educate the illiterate, improve the global standard of living, and ultimately bring about world peace. The sobering reality is that while communications technologies have a role to play in making the world a better place, the impact of any specific technological advance is likely to be modest. The limitations of new technologies are often not inherent in the technologies themselves but the result of regulatory or economic constraints. While the capability may exist to deliver any information anywhere in the world, many people lack the money to pay for it, the equipment to access it, the skills to use it, or even the knowledge that it might be useful to them. This book examines the complex ways in which communication technologies and policies affect the people whose lives they are intended to improve. The areas of discussion include Internet regulation, electronic voting and petitioning, monopoly and competition in communications markets, the future of wireless communications, and the concept of universal service.



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