

Highway to democr@cy – the Council of Europe and the information society

Kate Oakley

Integrated project “Making democratic institutions work”

Council of Europe Publishing

French edition:

Le chemin de la démocr@tie – le Conseil de l'Europe et la société de l'information

ISBN 92 871-5136-9

The opinions expressed in this work are those of the author(s) and do not all necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic (CD-Rom, Internet, etc.) or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without the prior permission in writing from the Publishing Division, Communication and Research Directorate.

Cover design: Graphic Design Workshop, Council of Europe

Council of Europe Publishing
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

ISBN 92-871-5137-7

© Council of Europe, June 2003

Printed at the Council of Europe

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Foreword	
<i>Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General of the Council of Europe</i>	5
Introduction	7
I. Policy statement and conventions	13
<i>Conventions</i>	15
The Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data	15
The Convention on Cybercrime	17
The Convention on the Legal protection of Services based on, or consisting of, Conditional Access	20
II. Policies for the information society	23
Employment, entrepreneurship, work and economic growth	23
E-democracy – a response to the democratic deficit?	28
Digital citizenship	36
The role of the media in e-democracy	38
E-voting	42
The technology for lifelong learning	43
Regional policy in the information society	47
Culture and creativity – the cornerstone of the information society	50
What is digital about the digital divide? Social cohesion and the information society	53
Science and technology	58
ICTs and the law	60
Conclusions	63
Appendix	65
Bibliography	69

FOREWORD

Few would dispute that information and communications technology (ICT) has greatly increased people's ability to participate creatively and actively in political, cultural, economic and professional life. Consequently, it is a priority for the Council of Europe to fully exploit the potential of ICTs as a means of improving people's direct participation in shaping the democracies they live in.

It is mainly through its multi-disciplinary project "Making democratic institutions work" that the Council of Europe is exploring this potential, with a view to enabling Europe's 800 million people to participate more directly and easily in public policy development and in setting up political agendas. The project is exploring the nascent field of "e-governance" and is preparing a European legal framework for electronic voting ("e-voting"). E-governance broadens the scope of online service provision currently offered by many governments to that of direct citizen consultation. E-voting is another element of the modernisation of democratic practice, complementary to other initiatives, to improve voter turnout and to increase the participation of the population in political life.

Work on these new themes is being carried out in the framework of the Europe-wide standards for ICT as a tool to uphold and develop democracy which have been set by the Council of Europe on such issues as data protection, access provision for rural areas, training for women and girls, the development of cultural activities and the dangers of cybercrime and cyber hate-speech.

Highway to democr@cy – the Council of Europe and the information society takes a broad approach to this topic, covering ICTs and employment, culture, social cohesion, the law and new issues in this field, some of which I have mentioned above. I am convinced that this publication will enable both specialists and general readers to gain a comprehensive view of the Council's policy development on ICT, through an analytical review of its legal texts and publications.



Walter Schwimmer
Secretary General of the Council of Europe

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to examine the vast series of reports, documents, statutory texts, publications and so forth that the Council of Europe has made on a broad range of information and communications technology (ICT) topics, over the last twenty years. During this time, the speed of technological change has been bewildering and public policy has at times struggled to keep pace with it. But a series of themes have emerged and have been consistently debated over the years to a point where there is a large body of academic and general research and writing around what we now think of as the “information society”.

Much of this work was summarised in the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers Declaration on a European policy for new information technologies, which brought together policy and research on a whole host of topics from e-democracy to public access to the Internet and the use of information technology (IT) in judicial proceedings. It remains the best and most comprehensive statement of Council thinking on the information society and will be discussed in more detail below.

The term “information society” is powerfully associated with a specifically European view of the changes that could result from widespread use of digital technologies. It gained currency in the early 1990s, at the same time as the term “information superhighway” was made popular in the United States by former vice-president Al Gore. Although not directly in contrast to the US notion, the information society was intended to be a broader vision – the idea that the increasing use of ICTs would open a path to new opportunities for sustainable growth and development, new potential for social inclusion and representation, and new ways to achieve social and cultural expression.

The democratic potential of ICTs has long been recognised and the Council is currently engaged in a major initiative in this area with a three-year integrated project entitled “Making democratic institutions work”, part of which will concern itself with the use of ICTs in promoting democracy.

The growing democratic deficit in western democracies is much discussed. Turnout at elections is falling. We are constantly told by opinion polls that politicians are not held in high esteem. But does all this mean that people are less interested in politics or the issues that govern their lives or simply that political parties as currently constructed and representative democracy, as

currently practised, has ceased to accurately reflect that concern? The role of ICTs in promoting democracy is at the heart of this paper and the Council's work in this area.

The information society debate is, however, a global one and has been influenced by two broad currents of writing about technology: the utopian and the dystopian. This dichotomy is a common feature of writing on technology and technological change. The pessimists or distopians – from the time of the Industrial Revolution and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein, or, the modern Prometheus* onwards – have tended to stress the loss of autonomy, the threat to traditional ways of life and culture and the “end of work” as aspects of technological change. As we shall see, many of these fears remain part of the debate.

The optimistic camp has always stressed the notion that ICTs can empower people to take more control of their lives and open up government and companies to greater scrutiny. They have held out the notion of a self-governing, egalitarian world, where communications technology can be used to promote a more democratic and inclusive society. The spread of technology, they argue, could provide forums for voices that have long been ignored – those of women, the poor, ethnic minorities and the people with disabilities for example. It could change the relationship between governors and the governed by allowing citizens access to the information that has previously been the preserve of elites and hence release the creative and problem solving abilities of people and of communities.

In more recent years, what is sometimes called a “techno realist” stance has begun to emerge. Integral to this perspective is the idea that the current tide of technological transformation, while important and powerful, is actually a continuation of waves of change that have taken place throughout history. Looking, for example, at the history of the motor car, television or the telephone and not just at the devices but at the institutions they became, we can see profound benefits as well as substantial costs. Similarly, we can anticipate mixed blessings from digital technologies, and these must be addressed by thoughtful design and appropriate use.

It is not our intention in this paper to adopt any particular stance, but it is important to understand these broad currents of thoughts as the background against which Council of Europe documents have been written.

What is also noticeable, given the timescale of the Council's work on this matter, is the change in emphasis that has been given to particular topics at particular times. The issue of work and employment with which we start the second part remains a live one, but gains fewer "column inches" than it once did. On the other hand, e-democracy is currently a topic of great interest in many member states and recent world events have pushed cybercrime and the specific issue of cyber-terrorism to the top of the agenda.

Given the role of the Council and its concern with issues such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law, its interest in the information society debate is clear. As a standards-setting body in the field of human rights and the development of international law, the Council is responsible for several conventions that touch on information society issues. In addition it has produced other legal instruments and non-binding recommendations. The Organisation also acts as a publisher and forum for exchange of ideas and information on a broad variety of information society topics and it is this role that is the primary concern of this paper. The Council's own information policy attempts to be a transparent one, as restricted documents are declassified one year after issuing. In addition, the Council's website (<http://www.coe.int>) provides access to a wealth of publications on information society issues.

Given its remit, the publications of the Council have attempted to steer clear of a deterministic, technology-focused view of ICTs and instead have reflected a concern with how technologies are being used and how they are changing the lives of European citizens, particularly in human rights and democracy.

It is also worth noting that the Council is an inter-governmental organisation which exists to provide a forum for the exchange of information and for the development of common actions between member states. In fast-moving areas such as ICTs, member states are obviously at vastly different levels of development and e-policies at a national level reflect national concerns and priorities, stages of economic development and particular history. The Council's role, on behalf of member states, has been to develop minimum standards and to seek consensual progress on areas that touch all member states, from cybercrime to data protection.

There is therefore not just one vision of the information society that is presented in its publications. The development of market societies in the former communist countries in Europe has led to a stress in some countries on the

potential of ICTs to bring about rapid economic development. Other member states – such as Sweden, Finland or the Netherlands – stress the democratic possibilities of ICTs – building on their traditions of participatory democracies. Some stress the role of national planning, while others the importance of regional and local autonomy. Within the notion of a European information society, therefore, there are many different ideas. The coalescence of these ideas around a core set of what we might call European principles, has been a major concern of the Council of Europe.

Structure of the paper

Our aim in this paper is both to consider the Council's input to the information society debate over the years and to summarise how that debate has progressed. We will begin by summarising what might be called top-level policies for the information society in general, before looking in more detail at work that has been done on a series of topics. ICTs touch almost every area of life for European citizens from crime to healthcare, but in order to produce a manageable and valuable document, we have chosen to focus on ten topics.

These include:

- Internet security and cybercrime;
- data protection and privacy;
- employment, work and economic growth;
- e-democracy, including freedom of expression;
- e-learning and its integration into education and training policies;
- regional issues including regional disparity, growth and governance;
- culture, including media and creativity;
- social cohesion, including topics such as the digital divide, people with disabilities, gender and young people;
- science and technology;
- ICTs and the law.

Most of the issues above have been explored via a variety of texts, including:

- recommendations and resolutions of the Committee of Ministers. Recommendations are non-binding legal instruments, which have been adopted unanimously by member state representatives. Resolutions have been developed that have the same legal status, but which involve the agreement of only a subset of member states.

- policy guidelines, which are generally recommendations from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;
- reports from the Parliamentary Assembly or from ministerial conferences;
- expert texts and analyses;
- other general publications.

As we have decided to explore those topics thematically, different kinds of publications will be treated together under particular themes. But there is one sort of publication which merits separate treatment. This is the conventions that are relevant to the information society. These are clearly different in kind from the other publications and will be discussed in the first part, where we will explore the issues of cybercrime and data protection.

The second part details the rest of the selected topics, outlining the subject under discussion, why it matters and what aspects of it have been reflected in Council publications. Any current work that the Council is undertaking in these areas will also be alluded to.

I. POLICY STATEMENT AND CONVENTIONS

Here we look briefly at the major policy statement that governs the Council's work on the information society and at three of the conventions it has been involved in, thereby fulfilling its role as a standards-setting body. The topics of cybercrime and data protection will be explored in some detail below, as background to the conventions.

But first we will look at why the Council has developed an interest in these issues. The aims of the Council of Europe are to:

- protect human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law;
- promote awareness and encourage development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity;
- seek solutions to problems facing European society (such as discrimination against minorities, xenophobia, environmental protection, drugs, organised crime and so on);
- help consolidate democratic stability in Europe by backing political, legislative and constitutional reform.

A glance at these aims shows how many of them touch on areas that are part of the information society debate. The Council of Europe's Strasbourg Summit in October 1997 decided to develop a European policy towards new ICTs, a policy that was finally adopted by the Committee of Ministers in May 1999.¹ This policy, an appendix to the Budapest Declaration – For a greater Europe without dividing lines – is known as the “Declaration on a European policy for new information technologies”, hereafter referred to as “the Declaration”.

It covers many of the areas we shall discuss later in greater detail such as freedom of expression and cultural diversity and is a clear and comprehensive statement of the Council's overall approach to information society policies.

The Declaration refers in particular to the potential of digital technology to contribute to promoting freedom of expression and information, political pluralism and cultural diversity. It recognises that digital technologies have

1. See appendix.

the potential to improve openness, transparency and efficiency at all levels of government, provided that the political will exists for them to do so. But the Council has always been clear about the dangers and downsides of ICTs and the same Declaration reflects and gives voice to concerns about privacy, data protection and the currently topical issue of cybercrime.

As the Declaration makes clear – the potential of ICTs to improve democratic processes can only be realised when there is widespread access, both to the technological infrastructure and to the skills and competences needed to make use of it. Technological infrastructure and levels of access vary widely between member states, as we shall discuss further on, but the Declaration commits all members to promote the broadest possible access within those constraints, particularly through the development of access points in public places. It also encourages member states to develop “e-government” systems that provide access to the various layers of government within member states as well as to the texts of laws and regulations.

Access itself is one issue that has been the focus of many information society debates over the last twenty years. In that time, we have developed a more sophisticated understanding of it and have come to realise that providing simple access is not enough. In addition to access, citizens need skills and competences that can enable them to make effective use of ICTs. The Declaration on new ICTs also commits member states to ensure that citizens get the help they need to develop such competences, both in the formal education system and more importantly, through a wide range of access to informal learning.

In order for citizens to become critical and informed consumers of information, they will need to develop increased media literacy and the Declaration recognises the importance of such training as part of its recommendations on the relationship between ICTs and the cultural and creative industries. The Council has long expressed an interest in these issues, having commissioned an independent task force to look at cultural policy in response to the Unesco World Commission on Culture and Development. Its report, “In from the margins” (1997) recognised the cultural significance of digital technologies and the need to develop a coherent cultural policy for the information society. We will discuss this issue in more depth in the next section, the point here is simply to emphasise the importance the Council has always given to the issue of culture – one that is often neglected in some national discussions of information society policy.

For Europe's cultural industries to develop and take advantage of ICTs, the diversity of Europe's cultures and identities needs not only to be recognised, but supported, particularly given the threat to this diversity from a global communications system currently dominated by the English language. This Declaration thus commits member states to encourage the provision of cultural, educational and other products and services in an "appropriate variety of languages and to promote the greatest possible diversity of these products and services".

And finally, the Declaration concerns itself with protection of rights and freedoms, notably freedom of expression, the protection of privacy, and personal data and the protection of minors. It encourages the establishment of international standards on authenticating electronic documents. Most importantly, the Declaration commits member states to adopt national and international measures to combat what will become known as "cybercrime", later enshrined in the European Convention on Cybercrime.

Conventions

The Council of Europe has an essential standards-setting role in the field of human rights and the development of international law. Much of this is achieved via European conventions, which are legally binding treaties. Those discussed below are of particular importance to the development of the European information society.

The Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data

Concerns about data protection have been around for many years and the increasing power and ubiquity of ICTs has intensified, rather than diminished them. At the same time, the "value" of personal information and the need to develop Europe's information industries has resulted in intense lobbying on behalf of companies who use personal data for competitive advantage. In addition, government departments, and third sector groups, from campaigning organisations to political parties, need to make use of personal data.

To make these initiatives work, security is paramount. If an individual fears their personal financial details may be exposed when going online to buy their groceries, they will balk. If a company has legitimate concerns that using the World Wide Web is a leaky medium for passing stock keeping unit (SKU)

information to a supplier, they will not use it. And if a voter were to find using a governmental portal compromised their personal data, they would feel rightly aggrieved.

These factors have prompted the creation of much interest in, on the one hand, creating robust and defensible means for ensuring the safe two-way (sender-receiver, receiver-sender) transmission of personal data, and on the other, legislative frameworks for the protection of that data and restricting the way it may be exploited.

The ICT industry has responded to the security question by the ceaseless promotion of various forms of privileged data transmission safeguards, ranging from secure sockets layer (SSL), the most basic form of security associated with the http transmission protocol for the web, to more exotic forms of cryptography, such as private key infrastructure (PKI).

These standards are plainly still evolving, and the healthy growth rates of commercial organisations selling equipment (firewalls, intrusion detection systems, anti-computer virus protection programmes and the like) indicate this problem is far from being solved to everyone's satisfaction (or at least complete peace of mind).

On the legislative side, this complexity is mirrored. How does the state balance the rights of individuals to privacy versus the need to at least some extent monitor and regulate their electronic behaviour in the interests of the wider community? What about the problems of commercial organisations? And finally, what of the concerns of the employer?

The right to privacy. This can range from the right not to be bombarded with unwanted "spam" – mass-mailed advertising e-mails that offer, unasked, access to a vendor's services – to the right not to have one's private communications open to scrutiny by a third party.

The interests of the community. Given global concerns over terrorism and recent financial scandals, some argue that if there is a basis for suspicion, a police, intelligence or financial regulator has a duty to intercept non-physical communications, where suspicion is alerted. On the other hand, socially responsible management of information means that those responsible for maintaining information on individuals, whether they are public or private sector, should ensure the quality and timeliness of information in their care,

should refrain from storing information that is not necessary for their purpose and should guard against unauthorised disclosure or misuse of the information.

The vendor's problem. The protection of intellectual property rights (IPR) may become one of the biggest issues of the Information Age. Entertainment, media and publishing companies are increasingly researching technologies such as digital rights management (DRM) to protect their content, be it music, video, proprietary content such as an electronic version of a technical manual or instructional material. The recent controversy over MP3 and Napster may just be the first skirmish in such a war.

The convention thus aims to balance these conflicting needs, reconciling respect for privacy with the free circulation of information. It consists of three main parts:

- substantive law provisions in the form of basic principles – each signatory should take the basic steps to give effect to the common core of basic principles laid down in this convention in its own, domestic legislation. The convention indicates what should be achieved by each principle, but the way it is implemented in domestic law is left up to each individual signatory;
- special rules on transborder data flows – the idea is that special rules are not needed between countries that have both signed the convention, as the common core of rules should be sufficient;
- mechanisms for mutual assistance and consultation between the parties – the convention provides mechanisms for co-operation between the contracting states, both in individual cases and with regards to the convention as a whole.

The Convention on Cybercrime

The events of 11 September and the subsequent war on terrorism have focused attention on an issue that was hitherto the concern of specialised policymakers, rather than the public at large. Malicious viruses such as the “love-me” virus have caused huge commercial losses, but of more recent concern is the development of so-called cyber terrorism.

According to the United States Government’s Computer Security Institute, there were 150 separate security threats to computers in 1995. By 2001, that

had increased to 1500 different threats, including viruses, denial of service attacks, hacking and Internet fraud.

Most commercial organisations say they have been affected by cybercrime to some extent. According to the Computer Security Institute, 90% of companies have experienced at least one cyber-security breach this year. The companies prepared to put a value on the losses resulting from these attacks reported combined costs of US\$ 265 billion in downtime, lost data and recovery efforts.

Outside the United States and the United Kingdom, one of the fastest growing cybercrime rates is in the Russian Federation, where fast Internet adoption has combined with limited official knowledge of security strategies to create a weak infrastructure. In 2001, a hacker known as Gorschkov used Hotmail e-mail accounts, together with randomly generated credit card numbers, to open accounts with the online payment broker PayPal. Gorschkov then posed as both buyer and seller in hundreds of eBay auctions, effectively paying himself using fake credit cards. Later the same year, a Russian computer hacker was arrested for extorting \$US 10 000 from a bank after breaking into its database and threatening to publish customers' account details.

Companies are certainly taking the threat seriously. A quarter of businesses surveyed by Morgan Stanley Dean Witter said they will increase spending on security technology in 2002 compared to 2001.

However, the challenge is directing that investment in the right places. European companies spent an average 1 million euros each last year on firewall, anti-virus and intrusion detection software. These tools alert managers to external attacks such as e-mails carrying viruses or hackers attempting to break into the corporate network. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, 81% of companies have installed firewalls, and 45% have installed intrusion detection software.

However, the evidence suggests that this is not enough to stop cybercrime, which is increasing at a rate of greater than 100%. The most likely explanation is that companies are focusing on the network perimeter and not paying attention to the most significant threat to Internet security – their own employees. Internal staff are responsible for 60% of all cyber-security breaches, from downloaded viruses to data that is smuggled out via e-mail or floppy disk.

While firewalls protect businesses from external threats, computer monitoring software is required to reduce the risk of internal breaches. Monitoring software is widely available that “sniffs” network traffic and detects confidential, libellous or dangerous material. In addition, web-filtering software can be used to prevent employees accessing non-approved Internet content, and can be tailored to alert managers to high-risk e-mail or Internet activities. Internal security breaches do more than put corporate data at risk. Companies are legally liable for any content carried on their network, so a destructive virus or libellous e-mail message sent to a customer or partner can result in expensive legal actions.

Technology can reduce the chances of being caught out like this, but software should be supplemented by an acceptable use policy (AUP), which should form part of the terms and conditions of employment. An AUP is essential when showing that the company has taken reasonable steps to prevent security breaches.

Serious as the threat from cybercrime is, it is also somewhat exaggerated or even romanticised in the media or popular entertainment. Reporters love stories of daring cyber break-ins, or virus stories that sweep the world; Hollywood cannot resist sneaky admiration for cyberpunk super criminals. The problem is that a real but probably manageable annoyance – irresponsible attacks on organisational perimeters, sometimes driven by no more than brio or a perverted sense of fun and challenge – get blown up into a shadowy ever-present menace.

There are however real concerns over the use of cyber-terrorist methods especially following the 2001 11 September attacks and their aftermath. The problem of political hacking is also on the rise. According to the Computer Security Institute, attacks on the British “gov.uk” domain increased 378% between 2000 and 2001, while attacks on Israel’s government and military domains increased 220% over the same period. Italy’s Guardia di Finanza arrested fourteen people earlier this year, accusing them of thousands of computer intrusions, including attacks on the United States Army and Navy and Nasa. The hacking group, known as the Reservoir Dogs, were protesting against United States foreign policy.

Some analysts suggest that organised cyber-terrorist groups have become increasingly sophisticated in 2002, using detailed digital surveillance and reconnaissance as well as gathering critical intelligence on targets. Governments

have responded by adopting a range of security measures, some of which have caused alarm to civil libertarians and others.

The Convention on Cybercrime was concerned with the broader issues of Internet security and has three primary aims. The first of these is laying down common definitions of certain criminal offences – including illegal access, illegal interception, data interference, system interference, misuse of devices, computer-related forgery and fraud, offences related to child pornography and offences related to copyright and neighbouring rights. Second is defining common types of investigative powers, which would allow criminal procedures to be brought into line between countries. Last, is determining both traditional and new types of international co-operation, thus enabling co-operating countries to rapidly implement the arrangements for investigation and prosecution, for example, by using a network of permanent contacts. The convention was ratified in November 2001 and has been signed by member states and significant non-members – including Canada, Japan, South Africa and the United States.

Cybercrime is currently being debated by the European Parliament in the context of a framework decision put forward by the European Commission. If passed, this will have two main effects – first, it will define what an attack against an information system (AAIS) is, and second, such an attack will be treated, within the European Union, as a crime, punishable with a prison sentence.

Such a regime has raised concerns in some quarters as many argue that the definition of an AAIS is too broad and that any penetration of a system without authorisation will be considered a crime. This will result in non-violent civil disobedience being treated in the same way as genuine criminal acts. Opponents argue that while crime should be crime, in cyberspace as in the real world, we must not use new powers to criminalise actions in cyberspace that are currently not crimes in the real world. In the current atmosphere of concern about terrorism, it is more important than ever that we have a transparent and trans-national framework for distinguishing genuine criminal activities from simple dissent or political opposition.

The Convention on the Legal protection of Services based on, or consisting of, Conditional Access

Conditional access services, as the name suggests, are those delivered generally by broadcast and digital communication means, where access is conditional

on payment of a fee or subscription. The growth of piracy had made rights holders and broadcasters nervous and the Council, given its large membership and its experience and expertise in the area of media law and policy – was felt to be the appropriate forum for the preparation of a binding legal instrument aimed at the protection of services based on, or consisting of, conditional access. While technical means to block illegal access exist and rights holders and other are encouraged to use them, it was felt that additional legal protection should be given.

Against this background, the Convention on the Legal protection of Services based on, or consisting of, Conditional Access was adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 October 2000 and opened for signature on 24 January 2001. The purpose of this convention is to make illegal on the territory of the signatory states, the following activities which give unauthorised access to protected services:

- the manufacture or production of illicit devices for commercial purposes;
- the importation of illicit devices for commercial purposes;
- the distribution of illicit devices for commercial purposes;
- the sale or rental of illicit devices for commercial purposes;
- the possession of illicit devices for commercial purposes;
- the installation, maintenance or replacement of illicit devices for commercial purposes;
- the commercial promotion, marketing or advertising of illicit devices.

Recognising that the above activities are often carried out across national boundaries, the Council of Europe member states foresee to provide mutual assistance in investigations and judicial proceedings relating to criminal or administrative offences established in accordance with this convention. The convention is not yet in force.

II. POLICIES FOR THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

This section contains the main body of the paper and will look at and attempt to summarise the Council's work on a variety of information society topics. In a paper of this size, the topics chosen and the discussion thereof cannot hope to be fully comprehensive. The aim instead is to give a flavour of the topics themselves, why they are important to any discussion of the information society, what Council publications have said on these topics and where future Council of Europe work on this area might lead.

It goes without saying that there are large degrees of overlap between the topics discussed. Any genuine policy on the information society will take into account the need for holism. Thus when we discuss social cohesion, we are also talking about culture and about access to work. When we talk about culture, we can include education. When we talk about privacy and data protection, we need to remember the arguments for freedom of expression. The categories below therefore are not watertight – very few Council publications fall into just one category. The division is simply a way of making the understanding of a huge range of topics both manageable and, ideally, engaging.

Employment, entrepreneurship, work and economic growth

Many of the current information society debates grew out of a pessimistic viewpoint, particularly in Europe, on the effect that digital technologies would have on employment. While the optimists saw the growth of the Internet and other technologies as the key to economic competitiveness, the pessimists have always stressed the potential of these technologies to destroy jobs.

Although the debate still rages, it seem safe to conclude that the gloomier predictions of the “end of work” have not come to pass and that while profound structural changes are clearly going on in Europe's labour markets, we are in a period of both creation and destruction.

Most commentators now accept that the development of a competitive high-speed ICT infrastructure and the skills to support it is crucial to Europe's economic competitiveness. The United States Department of Commerce argued that the IT and the Internet sector was at the heart of the American

economic expansion in the 1990s¹ and has “driven growth in almost every sector of the US economy by practically doubling labour productivity”. In Europe, economists also argue that these technologies have the potential to increase our productivity and GDP growth rate.² And the OECD has shown a rapid advance has been taking place in the share of technology and skills intensive activities in virtually all OECD economies.³

A recent report by economists and Diane Coyle and Danny Quah⁴ casts doubt on some of these figures, particularly those on United States productivity growth, but nevertheless concludes that we are at the beginning of a period of transformation and that “for organisations at least, ICT really has changed everything”. More importantly, they suggest that if we really want to understand, we need to understand demand, not just production. It is consumer demand, they argue, that is the engine of the new economy and the critical driver of innovation.

The 1997 Council publication *A virtual new world?*⁵ is based on reports and opinions given by the committees of the Council’s Parliamentary Assembly and addresses employment and the economy, among other issues. It acknowledges the centrality of the debate on employment and growth to the information society and points to the efforts of other international bodies in this field. Indeed, as the booklet suggests, the information society debate itself was in some ways sparked by the publication of the European Commission’s White Paper on “Growth, competitiveness and employment” in 1993. This paper specifically linked reducing unemployment to building the information society by noting the significance of ICTs for stimulating growth and employment and was extremely influential as an analysis of the issues.

These concerns with unemployment and the effects of ICTs on social solidarity in particular, reflected those of European policymakers, as high unemployment has persisted in many European economies throughout the 1990s and it remains one of our primary public policy concerns. In addition, the potential

1. United States Internet Council (USIC) and International Trade and Technology Associations, *State of the Internet, 2000*.

2. See, for example, PricewaterhouseCoopers European Economic Outlook, 2001(<http://www.pwcglobal.com/gx/eng/ins-sol/spec-int/eeo>).

3. *OECD Economic Outlook*, 68, 2000.

4. Diane Coyle et al., *Getting the measure of the new economy*, iSociety, Work Foundation, London.

5. *A virtual new world?*, Council of Europe Publishing, 1998.

of the knowledge economy to lead to social fragmentation, a “winner takes all” economy, with widening discrepancies between highly skilled knowledge workers and the rest, was also ringing alarm bells at the beginning of the 1990s, sounds that have grown louder ever since.

The chapter “New information technologies and employment” in *A virtual new world?* makes clear that overall changes in Europe’s labour markets in recent years have seen a relative decline in manufacturing with a corresponding growth in the importance of service- and knowledge-based sectors. This is a broad generalisation which does not of course take account of the differences between member states, but the late 1980s saw an average growth in service-sector employment of 2.5%, compared with only 0.5% in other sectors.

The growing strength of services as well as continued decline in primary industries points to an issue that is common across all European regions – the move towards an increasingly knowledge-based economy. This places a premium on higher learning and education levels, qualifications (which help to ensure labour mobility) and flexible working and puts the development of a knowledge economy at the heart of European economic and increasingly, social policy.

The chapter concludes that the impact of new technologies on employment is a complex debate, which is difficult to reduce to quantifiable data and which has to take into account the effects of globalisation on the European economy, alongside those of ICTs.

It also makes the important point that developing policy to deal with the challenge of the relationship between technology and employment must go beyond simply looking at labour markets and products. The relationship between different policy areas – education and learning, entrepreneurship and regional policy to name but a few, is a crucial aspect of the debate on the knowledge economy.

Willy Buschák in “Information society and employment” in *A virtual new world?*, draws attention to the sometimes exaggerated claims that are made for the impacts of technology on employment in the information society. There is often a sense in the debate that everything is being made new and all change is revolutionary, the sort of hyperbole that reached a climax before the dot-com crash of the late 1990s. Buschák points to one element of the employment debate that has been subject to such exaggeration – telework.

A recent report from the European Commission-sponsored Emergence project¹ claims that some 7% of the United Kingdom workforce or 1.8 million people worked from home using a computer and a telephone link to their employer or client and 5.5% were dependent on ICT to work from home. This represents an increase of 17% over the previous year in the size of the United Kingdom teleworkforce. Yet the numbers cover many who spend some time working from home using a PC or the telephone, but whose actual jobs remain largely office-centred. Buschák's point is that such numbers exaggerate the potential of telework to create new work, as he puts it, "today's teleworkers are mainly people who already work".

Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1314 pinpoints both positive and negative effects of new technologies on employment. It acknowledges the process of "creative destruction" that accompanies the introduction of new technology, and which means that initially the introduction of a new technology may lead to "social and economic upheavals". It adds: "the positive effects are felt only much later and result from the dissemination and widespread use of several innovations linked to the new technology".²

The recommendation echoes the earlier point that any policy response in this area must be multi-dimensional and cut across policy areas. It aims to strike a balance between European notions of social solidarity and the need for the labour market to adapt to these changes. It then goes on to list a series of measures that may help European societies to integrate new technologies more effectively. These include supply-side measures such as strengthening links between universities, other research bodies and industry, and developing a more flexible education system that can prepare young people for the new world of work. It suggests that legislation on payment and employment conditions, particular in SMEs and micro-businesses (or what it calls, the new cottage industries) need to be revised and that such firms can benefit from improved links to the international market and innovation networks. The development of learning networks to share good practice and the relocation of work to disadvantaged areas (taking advantage of technology infrastructures) are among other suggestions. Many of these suggestions have subsequently filtered down into a raft of legislation and policy guidelines at member state level.

1. U. Huws et al., *Where the butterfly alights: the global location of e-work*, report by The EC Emergence project, IES, Brighton, 2001.

2. See Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1314 (1997) on the new technologies and employment.

In 2000, the Assembly again considered the impact of new technology on employment – this time particularly on labour legislation. The Parliamentary Assembly report on the “Impact of new technologies on labour legislation”¹ acknowledges that new technologies are a driving force behind economic growth, but that their deployment in the work place has the potential to undermine workers’ protection.

Teleworking in particular is again a cause of concern for its potential to isolate workers and blur the boundaries between work and private life. This intrusion into family life, with the consequent stress and potential for health problems is highlighted, and in particular the potential for workers to work longer hours, with no real increase in wages. Although other research suggests that most teleworkers are “knowledge workers”, working occasionally from home, rather than low-paid workers who are consistently working in isolation, the danger of a long-hours culture is a real one, particularly where workers are paid by output, rather than by time.

The potential for ICTs to increase monitoring and surveillance, both at home and in the workplace, was also highlighted. Employers fear that increasing use of e-mail in the work environment is leading to its abuse. In response many companies are now looking at so-called “spy in the PC” software that will act as internal watchdogs to try and prevent this abuse.

But with increased pressure on employees, who may be working longer and longer hours and thus simply be in the physical workspace for much longer, there is a danger that companies will be seen as Big Brothers, devouring all their employees’ time yet not being prepared to give recompense. “If I cannot go to the supermarket because I’m in the office”, goes this argument, “surely I can take ten minutes out to buy my groceries online?”

This argument is of course complicated when, as happens on a regular basis, employees get fired for circulating messages with content, usually pornographic, but occasionally simply libellous. Plainly we are still evolving the right way to treat e-mail, and legislation may have to be adapted to this process.

The report also recommends that systems of health protection, from recognition and treatment of new occupational illnesses – stress, eyestrain, backache, repetitive strain injury – to the health needs of remote workers, be revised.

1. Parliamentary Assembly Doc. 8751, rapporteur : Mr Birraux.

The Assembly recommended that member states make any necessary statutory amendments to ensure that the current system of worker protection can cope with these changes and increased flexibility, in the workplace.

The report adds that a number of international organisations – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the European Union and so on, were currently looking at the whole issue of employment conditions in the new world of work and that the result should be the adoption of harmonised rules and good practice guidelines. However, it admitted that the social realities in the member states vary significantly and make the development of harmonised rules very difficult.

It concludes that the deployment of new ICTs in central and eastern Europe raised more concerns about labour protection than elsewhere, as these states tend not to be party to the European Social Charter.

The “end of work” rhetoric has cooled somewhat over the last ten to fifteen years, but in its place concerns about the polarising effects of a knowledge-based economy have grown. Many member states are hoping that the European social model, combined with high levels of investment in human capital, will suffice to constrain this polarisation, but as we will discuss below in the section on digital divide, additional measures may in many cases, be required.

E-democracy – a response to the democratic deficit?

The democratic potential of ICTs has long been recognised and much of the early enthusiasm for and experimentation with online communities reflected this. The Council itself has been publishing material on this debate for at least the last five years and, as mentioned above, is currently engaged in a major initiative in this area with a three-year integrated project “Making democratic institutions work”, which will partly concern itself with the use of ICTs in promoting democracy.

Many policymakers have joined the debate in recent years and national debates on e-democracy are currently taking place in many member states. The question is: Why do we think democracy is in trouble in Europe and what role can ICTs play, if any, in addressing this?

The growing democratic deficit in western democracies is much discussed. Turnout at elections is falling. We are constantly told by opinion polls that politicians are not held in high esteem. Across the European Union, the political classes are working to define the ultimate constitutional shape of the Union – *the finalité politique*. But the citizens of Europe, in opinion poll after opinion poll and in turnout at European elections, repeatedly demonstrate that they find such institutions and such discussions arcane and remote.

But does all this mean that people are less interested in politics or the issues that govern their lives? This seems unlikely. The growth of the anti-globalisation movement, the ability of petrol strikers or farmers to bring the roads to a standstill, even participation in radio talk shows, suggest that people remain interested in politics. Election turnout is variable across Europe and the last elections in France brought out many voters mobilised by the campaign to stop Le Pen from the presidency, suggesting profound attachments to democracy when it is seen to be under pressure. However, politics, with its supposed culture of spin, the sound bites for the media and the sense felt by many of a political class talking to one another rather than to the public, is in trouble, if not in terminal decline. As one commentator put it, “this has led to the sense that it’s all a game with no great relevance to the average person”.¹

Greater individualism, the erosion of traditional class and regional ties and rising levels of education means that most people no longer vote straight party tickets, because their parents or grandparents did. Voter behaviour is more volatile and single-issue politics rather than grand ideologies seem to be the order of the day. Narrow political agendas, particularly those on the xenophobic or extreme right, have been gaining attention and votes in some European elections, leading to understandable concern on the part of political elites.

Thus the idea that there is something wrong with our democracy persists, and with good reason. This issue for this paper is to determine what role, if any, do ICTs have in addressing this?

In the chapter on “Electronic democracy” in *A virtual new world?*, the author, J.-P. Masseret, suggests that demassification is a function of the information

1. *New media and social exclusion*, Hansard Society, July 2000 (<http://www.hansard-society.org.uk>).

society and the move from a mass, industrial society to the information society is at the root of our current democratic crisis. Individualism, changes in the workplace and a more casualised workforce, the development of personalised information and e-commerce are all examples of this.

This leads, says the author, to a series of conflicts which are heightened, though not created, by the presence of new ICTs. These include the conflict between:

- the principles of social and political democracy and the demands of the communications market;
- a universal tool (the Internet) and the dangers of exclusion from it;
- the facilities offered by communications technology and the fear of Big Brother;
- the authoritarianism inherent in vertical, one-way communications and the prospects for providing open, democratic networks;
- the immense mass of information available and the possibility of finding the time to reflect on or see things in their proper perspective.

In the way these challenges are presented, we can see elements of the familiar pattern of writing about technology – utopia or dystopia. The writer argues that electronic democracy could be the culmination of the democratic process, or it could lead to the disintegration of opinion. Most likely, neither extreme will be the case. ICTs have democratic potential, but their successful deployment will depend on the health of the underlying system. As the writer Randy Connolly once pointed out,¹ technological advances from the canal via the telegraph to the Internet have been hailed as, “online cures for a sickly social world”.

We can see a little of this techno-determinism in some of the e-democracy experiments going on around the world. This is particularly true of online voting, where greater access to technology is being promoted as the solution

1. “The rise and persistence of the technological community ideal”, in Werry and Mowbray (eds) *Online Communities*, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 2001.

to the problem, particularly of low voter turnout. We will discuss this issue in more depth below; the point here is simply that low voter turnout is more likely to be a symptom of dissatisfaction with what is on offer and only in a few cases is it a result of being difficult to vote by traditional means. A focus on the technology as the solution often obscures this argument.

Without relying on techno-determinism therefore, or seeing ICTs as the cure-all for democracy, what can the increased use of these technologies do to enhance and develop our democracy?

Providing information: this is generally thought of as a one-way relation in which government delivers information to citizens. Put simply, technologies like the Internet make more information available to more people. Governments can still bypass this and secrecy has hardly gone away, but the ability of citizens and advocacy groups to discover more about decisions that affect them and even the basis of these decisions is undoubtedly enhanced.

Consultation: a two-way relation in which citizens provide feedback on issues defined by government. This could mean greater citizen participation in political decision-making before the decisions are taken. Consultation by Internet and other means is widely undertaken in most member states but the limitation of such activities is thought to be that while citizens can respond – the questions are still framed by the political class, rather than by citizens themselves.

Active participation: a partnership in which citizens actively shape policy options, but where government retains the responsibility for final decisions.

It is this final set of activities – active participation – that has generated the most excitement and the one which the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council debated when it discussed these issues in some detail in 1997.

These debates resulted in Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1120 on the impact of new communication and information technologies on democracy. The discussion focused on the potential of ICTs to increase citizens' participation in democracy – not just at election times, but more frequently. In that way, citizens become part of the *policy-making process*, not just commentators after the fact.

The report, also by Masseret, which accompanies the resolution, acknowledges that this lack of consistent engagement is one of the problems of

contemporary democracy. Once the elections are over, what happens to the relationship between citizens and their representatives? We are swamped by opinion polls, but many acknowledge that these are not always accurate, representative or sophisticated barometers of *why people feel as they do*. Public meetings still take place on specific issues of concern, but many feel that they have gone out of fashion in the media age. Even when they were more popular, they were not always representative. Some groups, the elderly or those with young children to care for, are unlikely to go out in the evening to attend a public meeting. Others feel intimidated by political events and unwilling to make their point of view heard.

These exercises in public consultation hear all too often from the most active or engaged witnesses and many voices are never heard. This is not just bad for democracy, but bad for society, as those voices – the poor, the young or women, for example, are often marginalised from mainstream political debate, which often seems directed largely at the middle class family – a declining breed in many societies.

Political issues do engage people's attention and these issues do not just arise at election times. Nonetheless in most member states, the avenues for political and democratic expression outside of election times is severely limited. Thus the idea of direct democracy, whether through the increasing use of referenda, public consultation, participatory budgeting or any other means, has gained attention in some circles.

Masseret takes a fairly sceptical line on some of the claims made for direct democracy. First, he argues that direct democracy is not necessarily in contradiction to more usual systems of representative democracy, though it is sometimes seen in this way. As he puts it, "the use of direct democracy must be regarded as a complement. Even in Switzerland, often held up as an example of direct democracy, 95% of decisions are taken by parliament".

The paper considers in some detail the role for referendums in direct democracies and briefly, how ICTs could be used to extend democracy outside of institutional systems – what we might call peer to peer networking, linking communities of interest but bypassing formal political structures.

The author also warns that direct democracy should not be seen as a cure-all for democratic ills. Greater participation is to be welcomed, but ICT also opens up the possibility, as Resolution 1120 says, of "manipulation of consciences, commercialisation and fragmentation of political messages, a

surfeit of opinion polls, the marginalisation of parliamentary procedures, social discrimination, the monitoring of citizens and the draft towards an instantaneous but devalued form of democracy". In other words, a sort of instant democracy could drown out more thoughtful, deliberative discussion. Populist responses to issues of the day may gain attention, but long- and medium-term issues would be drowned out in favour of instant responses to instant problems. Few of us would want to live in a society where every issue of policy could be decided by an instant, online plebiscite.

These potential pitfalls are dwelt on in more detail in "E-democracy" in *A virtual new world?*, where the same author points out that the use of ICTs is not cost-free and there remains a danger that this technology will be dominated by large corporations, or established political parties, drowning out smaller or more marginal voices. It is relatively easy to ensure equal air-time for all political parties on broadcast TV, impossible on the Internet.

Greater use of and understanding of personal data means that politicians could spend more of their time communicating only with those voters who "matter". In other words, those who live in regions or towns where the vote is marginal, or those who are likely (on a range of demographic indicators for example) to vote for the party in question.

Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1120 concerned itself primarily with the potential for ICTs to open up new forms of participation by making it possible "for contacts and exchange of ideas without censorship by undemocratic authorities". It thus urged member states to promote policies that:

- at the legal level ensure effective use of ICTs in a way that is consistent with democratic principles and human rights;
- avoid the introduction of complex and unworkable rules that would hamper the deployment of ICTs;
- organise training in ICTs from the earliest age in the formal education system;
- provide universally accessible and affordable computer facilities;
- endow national parliaments with the equipment needed for citizen consultations;
- promote appropriate legal frameworks for data protection and privacy.

It is interesting from the perspective of five years later to see how many of the recommendations put forward in this resolution have been taken up and advanced by member states.

We can use our categories of information, consultation and participation to consider these developments. Recent work by the Puma project (Public Management and Governance),¹ presented at an agenda-setting workshop on e-governance hosted by the Council in June 2002, suggested that with the advent and acceleration of e-government across nations, the scope, quantity and quality of information-type interactions with citizens has increased greatly. Furthermore, an increase in information is now a shared objective for all OECD countries. In other words, information of all sorts is available more widely and more cheaply than at any other time in human history. But are we better informed? Here the evidence is less clear.

The volume of information has led to complaints of “information overload”. People are bombarded with data and information beyond their powers to absorb it – so much so that some larger corporations have introduced e-mail-free days to encourage staff to take a break from the volume of information. In the hope, presumably, that they will indulge in verbal communication or thought.

The information available on the Internet reflects the interests and thoughts of the few, rather than the many – it is overwhelmingly in English, often reflects a scientific, technical or bureaucratic standpoint and tends to under-reflect local, informal knowledge. In global terms, it is clearly the voice of the North, not the South.

Information – particularly government-type information – tends to be supply, rather than demand led. There is a huge amount of information on the average government website, but is it what people really want to know? In the United Kingdom, for example, a vast amount of information is produced on the performance of schools, such as how many pupils, how many exam results at what level and how they compare year on year. However, the so-called league tables of school performance compiled from this evidence has been strongly criticised, partly because by concentrating on exam results they under-represent the degree to which a school has made progress with its intake – and schools with children from more affluent backgrounds tend to do better on this measure than those from less affluent ones. But it is questionable that they are therefore better schools. Equally importantly, such basic measures cannot capture what it is that local people might value about their school – its atmosphere, or its role in the community for example. This is not to suggest

1. *Puma policy brief No. 1: Engaging citizens in policy-making*, OECD.

that local, informal knowledge should be privileged over official statistics. After all, many people may value their local hospital because it is in their locality, but if its rates of recovery from surgery are worse than other hospitals, then people have the right to know. The point is simply that providing information is not a neutral activity. A complex set of values, messages and perspectives are buried in even the most simple civic website.

The Puma project also observed a rise in consultation, though at a slower rate than the provision of information. Large differences in this activity remain amongst OECD countries. The primary question still is: Who is consulted and about what? The OECD work suggests that consultation has only recently been recognised as an essential element of public policy-making in all OECD countries and that legal, policy and institutional frameworks are still under development. In the case of active participation, the OECD work is most sceptical. It reports that efforts on the part of governments to engage citizens in this way remain rare, and live examples are limited to only a very few countries.

Mixed experiences and variable outcomes were also reported by the Council of Europe's Group of Specialists on on-line services and democracy (MM-S-OD), which is currently undertaking a comparison of e-governance progress across Council of Europe member states. Ten countries have to date returned a questionnaire that included requests for national information on the following subjects:¹

- general policy on e-government and e-democracy;
- universal and equal access to new communication and information services;
- general plan of action in the field of e-government or e-democracy;
- laws adopted or projected;
- existence and use of online consultation machinery;
- political parties and politicians: openness to the public and public participation;
- online activity as a reflection of administrative structures of customer oriented structures;
- the role of the media.

This is not the place for a detailed examination of the findings to date – an analysis is currently being undertaken by the group of specialists.² But the

1. See Council of Europe, "Analysis of the replies to the questionnaire on the democratic potential of the new communication and information services", 19 March 2002, Doc. MM-S-OD (2002) 1.

2. Ibid.

findings so far suggest that the majority of effort is going into what we call straightforward e-government or electronic service delivery (ESD), not into tools for enhancing democracy.

For example, “seven of the ten respondents to date say clearly that they have more or less active policies on e-government and e-democracy”,¹ and in terms of taking the first steps towards greater citizen involvement in the democratic process, “nine states have special parliamentary sites and/or offer e-mail contact with parliamentarians”. Estonia, whose “Today I decide” website is an online facilitated forum linking citizens to Parliament, was singled out for special mention. In general, experiments with e-democracy are being carried out, but while some member states have specific targets for the availability of public services online, few have similar targets for e-democracy services. Without these kind of targets or outcome measures, it is difficult, as the authors acknowledge, to assess progress towards e-democracy in member states. Very few respondents, for example, can say how their experiments in consultation translate into impacts on decision-making.

What is clear is that e-democracy must allow greater potential for the public to set the political agenda, not just respond to a pre-set agenda dictated by the political class. We need to use the processes of e-democracy – online polling, discussion groups, citizens panel and so on to tease out the agenda of citizens. A recent example in the United Kingdom took place in the city of Bristol, where the municipality conducted an online poll on skateboarding facilities among young people. The response was higher than usual for such polls and represented an opportunity to engage with young people – traditionally among the most disaffected groups – on other related issues, such as leisure, use of public space, crime or drugs. These discussions will not always be formulated in a language that is recognisable to policymakers. They may take place partly online and partly face to face. But the opportunity to engage with people on subjects that interest them and then broaden out these discussions to wider policy areas, should not be missed.

Digital citizenship

The deployment of ICTs has continued to grow dramatically in the last five years; many more citizens have access at home and public access points have

1. See Council of Europe, “Analysis of the replies to the questionnaire on the democratic potential of the new communication and information services”, 19 March 2002, Doc. MM-S-OD (2002) 1.

been developed in most member states, though the number and quality of such access points will vary dramatically. The education system of most member states will now include an ICT component – but we are less confident perhaps of what it means to be a digital citizen. In other words, what skills, knowledge bases and competences do we need to participate in e-democracy?

Political and what might be called “civic” literacy is obviously still an area where member states need to do a lot of work. The issue of Internet voting has achieved resonance in many states, as we will discuss shortly, but participatory democracy remains underdeveloped in Europe.

At the June 2002 workshop on e-governance, a presentation from Task Force eLuxembourg entitled “E-literacy, e-governance and democracy”¹ set out the broad issues around Internet literacy and described the practical measures being taken in Luxembourg to develop digital citizenship. The table below summarises what is required on the part of citizens and government officials for different types of information and service provision.

Requirements for e-democracy – Task Force eLuxembourg

Citizens	Information and service provision	Government officials
Functional literacy; access to technology	Access to information and legal texts, debates, etc.	Well-designed portals; transparency; synergy; clear, precise information
Critical thinking skills, media and political awareness, life-long learning	Interaction between citizens and government.	Accountability; provision of appropriate com. channels; universal representation
Analysis, synthesis, knowledge of services available	User-geared public services	Public as consumers; ethics; standard setting

Source: Task Force eLuxembourg

1. Council of Europe, see “Report on the agenda-setting workshop on e-governance”, Matthew Wolstenholme, Doc. IP1 (2002)18.

The role of the media in e-democracy

An interesting area of this research is the potential role of the media in the development of e-democracy in general and the promotion of online interaction with institutions in particular. As quoted from the Group of Specialists on on-line services and democracy briefing:¹

The media can do two complementary things to get people involved in open discussion of public-interest topics. Firstly, they can organise websites and discussion forums. This is the commonest approach, and the replies to the questionnaire show that such undertakings are very widespread, since all of the ten States refer to them. The actual methods vary.

... Secondly, the media can make the public more aware of the new communication technologies and publicise events which call for their on-line participation. Their aim here is to make Internet use an automatic reflex, and encourage the public to exploit its full potential. This requires action by all the media, and not just the online media. France raises this question. Public consultation exercises are publicised on the Internet and via e-mail, but also on cable or satellite TV, in the press and on the radio.

We will discuss Council of Europe material on the media specifically in a later section, but the argument here is simply that we cannot talk about democracy as if it were just a relationship between citizens and government. A whole host of third sector organisations, including the media, have a vital role to play in nurturing free and open debate, without which no democracy can thrive.

In 1998, the Council's Culture Committee acknowledged the decisive role that digital technologies could play in promoting freedom of expression, as part of its work on the New Information Technologies project, which lead up to the Council's Declaration on a European policy for new information technologies (1999). A publication of relevance here is *Public access and freedom of information in networked information: guidelines for a European cultural policy*.² The aim of these guidelines was to provide a framework for the implementation of policies guaranteeing freedom of expression, as well as access to information held by cultural institutions. The first part of this publication, which draws on a report by Dr Paul Sturges, states optimistically:

Cyberspace provides every member of society with an opportunity to express what they wish to share with others, make their ideas and their desires known

1. Ibid, p. 24.

2. Council of Europe Publishing, 2001.

and discuss them with people from other cultural or social backgrounds and from other parts of the world without the interference of any external power.

This is the dream of the Internet as a place where free exchange of ideas happens on a peer to peer basis. The report argues that these possibilities inspire fear in some – particularly government and the security agencies. It might also have added that they inspire fear in large corporations and owners of copyright, as a whole host of decisions from the closing of music sites like Napster to the recent US court decisions on Microsoft, can attest to.¹

In response to these fears, the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy² emphasises the need for self-regulation by information providers and service operators and for public education in digital technologies. The report argues that legislative solutions to concerns about what some see as abuses of this freedom (including hate material, xenophobia or child pornography) are generally inappropriate and often ineffective. It suggests instead the use of filtering and blocking mechanisms where users require it (now widely available) and continued self-regulation. However, it went on to point out that self-regulation should not mean self-policing, so the relative spheres of law enforcement agencies and regulatory bodies need to be clearly delineated.

The second part of this publication concerns itself with providing guidelines for European policy-makers in drawing up legal instruments or recommendations to ensure freedom of expression on the Internet. These guidelines were themselves the subject of extensive consultation before being approved by the Culture Committee and the former Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) in 2000. The guidelines proceed from the notion that public access to networked information offers unparalleled opportunities to gather and disseminate information, develop personal creativity and strengthen linguistic and cultural diversity, but carries, on the other hand, inherent dangers and access to content which is either illegal or potentially harmful, particularly, but not exclusively, to young people.

To counter this, the guidelines stress the role of public access, which is both affordable and widely available and provides as far as possible, electronic

1. See Lawrence Lessig, *The future of ideas*, 2001, for a detailed discussion of this argument.
2. Organised by the Council of Europe in Thessalonica, December 1997.

literacy (or what we have referred to above as digital-citizenship skills). The guidelines then suggest principles of public access (including privacy of users) and in particular, safeguards for children's access at public points. However, they argue that the use of software filtering at public access points is an unnecessary interference with the citizens right of access to information and if any such systems are used, this act should be clearly stated within the site's published access policy.

In 2001, Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2001) 8 on self-regulation concerning cyber content was adopted, which extends these guidelines further. While stressing the importance of freedom of expression, this recommendation details what might be considered exceptions to this general rule and recalls related Committee of Ministers recommendations – Recommendation No. R (89) 7 concerning principles on the distribution of video games having a violent, brutal or pornographic content, Recommendation No. R (92) 19 on video games with a racist content, Recommendation No. R (97) 19 on the portrayal of violence in the electronic media and Recommendation No. R (97) 20 on “Hate Speech”.

Stating that the freedom to use new communications and information services should not prejudice the human dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of others, especially of minors, Recommendation (2001) 8 invites member states to encourage the establishment of organisations which are representative of Internet actors, for example Internet service providers, content providers and users. Such organisations should not be involved only in the development of laws on cyber content, but also adopt and apply their own codes of conduct. Since then, the debate on freedom of expression versus censorship on the Internet has moved on in three important respects.

There has been a growth in both technical products available to parents, such as Net Nanny, which can help block certain content, and a growth in the use of ratings systems, similar to films, for example for computer games. Most of these changes have been accepted by producers as self-regulation, rather than having the force of law. From the point of view of civil libertarians, concern has grown about the threat from rights holders to the extensions of copyright and intellectual property rights.

Terrorist attacks and the aftermath of 11 September have alarmed government and security services and resulted in more “authoritarian” measure being contemplated to control content.

Both these arguments are very live at the time of writing and we have discussed the second of them in slightly more detail in part one. The concerns about extension of copyright and intellectual property rights have most eloquently been voiced in the work of Lawrence Lessig and other American writers.¹ Lessig's work concerns itself with what the author sees as threats to the creative potential of new technologies, by legal moves such as the extension of copyright and intellectual property rights. Lessig argues that the growth of digital technologies "could enable an extraordinary range of ordinary people to become part of the creative process," moving from passive consumers to participants and developing in the process an "innovation commons", a space for free exchange of ideas and innovation.

But just as we are on the cusp of creating this new sphere of activity – where anyone can, "rip, mix, burn", as the Apple computer advertisements tell us – a countermovement of lawyers, large content owners and complicit governments is threatening this potential. This battle over public versus private knowledge space is broad and goes beyond digital technology – one of the most important battlegrounds is over the privatisation of the "knowledge" encoded in our genes, for example. Where Lessig and others are concerned is with the question of what balance should be struck between rights-owners and users of that content.

In the current climate of fear about terrorism as well as periodic moral panics, usually resulting from crimes against children, civil libertarians have been alarmed at increasing attempts to control content on the Internet. They mourn the loss of a relatively unpoliced realm, where in the words of John Perry Barlow, "your legal concepts of property, expression, identity, movement, and context do not apply to us".² Others welcome the relative normalisation of cyberspace – the extension of the norms, codes and values that govern the real world into the virtual one. This is a very old battle and it is unlikely that we will see the end of it soon.

Two further draft texts are currently being worked on at the Council that seek to maintain this difficult balance. The first is a draft declaration on freedom of communication on the Internet. This is primarily concerned to prevent politically motivated restrictions on freedom of expression on the Net and seeks to ensure that member states do not impose tighter restrictions than those that

1. Lawrence Lessig, *op. cit.*

2. John Perry Barlow, *A declaration of the independence of cyberspace* (see: <http://www.eff.org>).

exist for traditional media. It also seeks to prevent prior state control, such as general blocking or filtering (by public authorities such as the police) or the participation of the public, not just as consumers but also as producers of Internet content. This explicitly recognises the difference between media such as the Internet and traditional broadcast media, with its clear distinction between producers and the audience. Given this, it also seeks to preserve the right to anonymity for Net users, providing this does not violate national criminal law.

The draft also seeks some protection for intermediaries, such as Internet service providers, from having to monitor third party content that they transmit. The draft is seen as a reaction to what it describes as “a marked tendency by some governments to restrict and control access to the Internet in a manner which is incompatible with international norms on freedom of expression and information”. It will perhaps not satisfy the most extreme libertarians, but it should go some way to assuaging the fears of those who feel that the censors have been gaining the upper hand in many of these debates of late.

The record piece of work underway in this theme is the draft recommendation on the right of reply in the online environment. While this acknowledges the impracticality of providing rights of reply for non-professional online media, it argues that the speed and technical ease with which corrections can be made to false or misleading information is an argument in favour of right of response. The debate will no doubt centre on whether such a tradition, derived from professional media, can be valid in a media dominated by what American technology writer, Clay Shirky, calls “mass amateurisation”.¹ In other words, the Internet is primarily a means of mass communication, not a broadcasting medium and the question of whether it should be regulated similarly to traditional media remains a live one. Both these texts are currently provisional and may be changed in detail before adoption by the Committee of Ministers.

E-voting

The issue that springs to many minds when the subject of e-democracy is discussed is online or electronic voting. Although proponents of e-democracy often argue that this is the crudest element of the whole concept – voting

1. Clay Shirky, *Weblogs and the mass amateurisation of publishing* (see: <http://www.shirky.com>).

being merely an expression of a democracy that is working, it is the subject of much interest and experimentation in many member states.

An exploratory meeting on e-voting was recently held at the Council of Europe,¹ under the framework of the integrated project “Making democratic institutions work”. The purpose of the meeting was to examine pilot initiatives and gather the opinions of researchers, policy-makers and technical specialists, with a view to defining the scope of potential work by the Council of Europe in the field of e-voting, before starting a formal consultation procedure with member states on the development of European standards in this field.

The meeting heard about the potential benefits that can be expected from e-voting, including:

- *increased voter turnout*: as long as e-voting is complementary to classical voting techniques, it obviously cannot lower the turnout any further and is generally expected to increase it;
- *improved quality of voting*: the theory of participatory democracy holds that democratic debate is necessary for a quality policy process;
- *reduction of non-intentional “blank” votes*: in the Canton of Geneva, the system perceives a blank vote as an error and draws the voter’s attention to it (but an intentional blank vote remains possible);
- *improved cost-effectiveness*: the United Kingdom Government has examined this issue and concluded that for economies to be made, purely electronic voting must be available, as using parallel methods will result in few savings.

The paper produced from the meeting argues that there is an urgent need for an internationally agreed set of standards on e-voting to guide member states, an increasing number of which are preparing or running e-voting pilots.

The technology for lifelong learning

Interest is growing in the use of online and multimedia versions of educational and training materials – so-called e-learning, or electronic learning – as a means of delivering education cheaper and more flexibly than traditional class- or tutor-centric means.

1. Council of Europe, “Exploratory meeting on e-voting”, July 2002, Doc. IP1 (2002) 17e.

At the same time, we are becoming increasingly used to the idea of lifelong learning, suggesting that education does not stop at the university or school gates. Distance learning, online leaning and other forms of technology-mediated education have been with us for some time. What is increasingly clear is that Industrial Age forms of education (such as schools) cannot provide us with the full range of skills we need throughout life.

Commercial organisations have seized on e-learning as a solution to the need to continually train workforces that may be widely geographically displaced or in flux due to rapid turnover. Faced with the need to train staff on a new product or a new internal standardised computer package, booking company-wide classroom time is an expensive and time-consuming process that necessitates taking staff out of front-line activities. The same principle can be applied to governmental or non-governmental organisations.

E-learning's promise is that a better use of resources ensure that people learn in their own way, at their own pace, by using their computer terminals as a virtual classroom. Self-paced tutoring with the system being an infinitely patient and tireless companion and teacher is the vision. By extension, e-learning can also be used not just to teach "hard" skills, but "soft" or social skills.

Indeed many would argue that these softer skills are what really count in a knowledge-based economy. What we really need to develop is not particular skills or knowledge, but the ability to constantly acquire new skills and knowledge, in other words the ability to learn. Crucial to this is our ability to communicate and develop relationships. The ability to work well with other people leads to the ability to learn – as learning is most effectively done by asking questions of other people. Javier Bayer of the Talent Foundation¹ calls such skills "long-term skills", as he argues that they are what sustain us and allow us to learn new vocational skills. He states that "a long-term skill would be 'to establish trustworthy relationships' or 'listening to clients requests'; a short-term skill would be 'to use a specific software package'". In other words, soft skills are for life. These skills can be acquired in a variety of ways, including via classroom teaching. But they can also be developed by individuals at their own pace, in their own place and in ways which suit them – all of which ICTs, by facilitating remote and self-directed learning, are supremely good at.

1. "Learning to let go" in *Education futures*, Design Council & RSA, 1999.

All of this does not mean that education and learning via face to face contact is going to go away. But it does mean – as it does in government and in business – that roles are changing. Teachers can no longer be repositories of all knowledge – the best we can hope for is that they are effective knowledge brokers – instilling a love of learning and orienting us to the vast educational possibilities that technologies such as the Internet can hold out. There are numerous examples of this and the key to success seems to be when online education is used to supplement, not supplant traditional learning and when learning takes the form of collaboration with a wider community than the classroom.

The public sector has also been impressed with the e-learning promise. Online training courses in basic numeracy and IT skills all the way up to purely online Masters and MBA degrees are now available in the education sector. Norway has implemented a national online learning network, a project involving the partnership of unions, employers and state universities, allowing workers the opportunity to acquire commercially recognised certificates and qualifications as well as conventional educational degrees.

The Council of Europe has looked at the use of ICTs, both in schools and in post-16 education. Indeed one of its first publications on this subject was a decade ago, when the Standing Conference on Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, later to become the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, looked at the use of ICTs in training.¹ Although the technology has changed fairly dramatically since 1992, many of the issues about the integration of technology into education and training systems remain the same.

Some eight years later, a series of seminars and symposia on the use of ICTs in schools led to the publication of *Information technologies in schools: reasons and strategies for investment*.² By now the issues were not so much whether to use ICTs in education, but how we should go about this effectively. The background remains the constant need to skill and re-skill that a knowledge-based economy demands. In addition, new types of skills, for example media literacy, creativity, or collaborative working, feature highly in curricula. A more profound question asked in this book and one to which the answer

1. Council of Europe, *Advanced information technologies: the impact on training*, Studies and Texts, 1992.

2. Council of Europe Publishing, 2000.

is not yet clear whether the education system as currently constructed would be destroyed.

Information technologies in schools looks at how different policies were being applied to the use of ICTs in education throughout member states. A new vision of schools – one that is more open to the outside world and where teachers as well as pupils are encouraged to see themselves as co-learners, is presented.

While we are now encouraged to think about the curriculum as something “delivered” to students by teachers, this is not in fact how people learn. Increased teacher autonomy and greater development of the skills for teaching creatively are important. In addition, some argue that teacher training and professional development should include a stronger focus on multi-disciplinary teaching and learning. Many go further and argue that teachers themselves are part of the problem – lacking the skills, from IT to entrepreneurship, that they need to pass on to young people.¹ Indeed the conventional lifelong career, which is under threat in many parts of the economy, remains the pattern for most teachers.

This book also examines the ability of the education system to act as a market for e-learning products and concludes that many teachers and educational administrators are ill-equipped to act as sophisticated buyers of these products. This in turn is effecting the development of the e-learning industry – one that has often seemed posed for huge expansion, but which has not yet fulfilled its promise.

The problem is twofold. The e-learning industry is split into so-called content providers and the purveyors of heavy-duty learning management systems (LMS), large pieces of enterprise software comparable in their cost and complexity to an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. The content providers, many of whom have their roots in a previous generation of e-learning called computer based training (CBT), have been accused of simply transferring their material to a Web format without paying sufficient attention to making this content and its delivery reactive and dynamic in its interaction with the user. In other words, underestimating the commitment of e-learning consumers to using the new medium and not worrying enough about maintaining their attention throughout an entire course.

1. See, for example, Mathew Horne, *Enterprise learning*, Demos, 2000.

At the same time, the LMS systems have proven to be difficult to justify in terms of return on investment. While many employers have invested many millions of euros in their purchase, actual benefits are unclear. Much work needs to be done to measure the effectiveness of e-learning in this context – and there is some evidence that few online courses in these firms ever get completed, and that many expensive learning centres lie unused.

It appears to be the case that pure e-learning is now seen as insufficient, and the best approach is blended – a mixture of straightforward at-your-desk learning supported and accompanied by at least some level of live teaching. E-learning is not going away, though its future as a cure for all educational ills appears to be in doubt. It has vast potential to offer distributed educational opportunities and the use of rich media and broadband to offer a range of material – video, sound, graphics, interactive scripts, even games or puzzles – is tantalising. But any serious deployment of e-learning must not underestimate the social context of learning, and hence cannot substitute for direct contact between learners.

Regional policy in the information society

The development of the Europe's knowledge-based economy has so far served to reinforce earlier patterns of economic inequality. These mean that larger cities, together with some regional conurbations, have benefited in terms of high value added work, while declining manufacturing and remote and rural regions are suffering.

As the knowledge economy is what drives demand for information and communications technology, infrastructure development is following the market – thus demand for broadband is high and prices are more competitive within big cities, but declining industrial areas and rural areas are being left behind. Even within regions such as London we can see age-old patterns being replicated, with South and West London, traditionally more prosperous, having much higher home access to the Internet than traditionally poorer East London.

The dangers inherent in these regional disparities and the need to ensure that all Europe's citizens have a chance to benefit from the information society, has long been a concern of the Council of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, a consultative body of the Council, founded in 1994. It convened three seminars in 1998, the first in Helsinki (Finland), the second in Miercurea Ciuc (Romania) and the third in Hradec Kralove (Czech Republic)

to consider the implications of the information society for regional policy. Proceedings were published in 2000.¹ All of the discussions focused on a variety of issues including:

- the role of local institutions, such as schools and libraries in public access strategies;
- skills development;
- the competitive standing of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- local growth in demand for telematic services and the possibility of new employment;
- e-democracy and the need to widen public participation and allow citizens to affect decision-making processes.

The second of the seminars paid particular attention to the situation in southern and eastern Europe. It opened with a presentation from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe's Committee of the Regions, which laid out the situation in Europe, and the variety of local and regional responses to uneven development. Uneven development is particularly apparent in the telecommunications infrastructure, where market forces alone are in danger of "hard-wiring" these regional and local patterns of disadvantage.

The concern of the Committee of the Regions is that less favoured regions will suffer increased competitive disadvantage as the information society develops, thus its structural and cohesion funds are designed to minimise these disadvantages. But the use of funds and the attitude to infrastructure development varies across Europe, from the publicly-funded fibre optic networks of Stockholm, to the more market-led developments in other parts of Europe.

However, infrastructure development is only the most visible sign of uneven development in the information society. Where a knowledge-based economy develops, a competitive infrastructure will follow, but of more concern perhaps is the uneven development of education and training, business support and entrepreneurship that underlies this demand for infrastructure.

Many commentators argue that e-governance has the potential to lead the development of a more knowledge-based economy in all Europe's regions.

1. *Local and regional information society, Proceedings, Helsinki, January 1998*, Council of Europe Publishing 2000, and *Local and regional information society, Miercurea Ciuc, October 1998*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2000.

E-governance means not just putting public services online, but a set of technology-mediated processes that could change both the delivery of public services and the broader interactions between citizens and government. Several papers in the Miercurea Ciuc proceedings develop this notion. Papers by Michael Macpherson on e-democracy and Michael Mulquin on community networks argue that the key to building a more sustainable and balanced knowledge economy is to develop the knowledge capacities of the public sector and the community and voluntary sector. Others argue for the role of the public sector in ensuring the diffusion of specific technologies, such as geographic information systems (GIS).

The final set of papers feature presentations of specific information society regional projects. Many of these projects, such as the Iperbole system in Bologna are very well known, other less so, but many face the same problems of sustainability and replication.

The Congress concluded its analysis of challenges and opportunities associated with the information society at regional and local levels by recommending¹ to public authorities priority areas of action in establishing the enabling conditions for the development of information society applications, and guaranteeing access for all categories of citizens, including those living in remote regions.

Information society applications which have the potential of strengthening democratic governance and its legitimacy, and promoting openness, transparency and accountability of administration are given specific prominence in the CLRAE recommendation. Such applications would involve in particular:

- provision by parliaments, governments and public agencies of information for citizens, public and private institutions;
- enhanced interaction between politicians and citizens;
- closer guidance of elected representatives and governments by public involvement, especially in the legislative periods between elections;
- initiatives which aim to promote public debate and communication on matters of general concern, including information and communication technology applications to citizen participation in governance and direct democracy;

1. CLRAE Recommendation 54 (99) on local and regional information society.

- electronic voting to select candidates in elections, and on laws and public issues;
- direct decision-making by citizens on at least some issues;
- gradual transformation of representative “delegatory” democracy into a process with more deliberation and more involvement of citizens.

The issue of regional disparities in the European information society is likely to become more important in the next few years and demand more of the attention of policy-makers. Disparities between Europe’s regions are likely to grow. Indeed the development of the knowledge economy that so many regions are actively pursuing exacerbates many of these tendencies, increasing the returns to education and knowledge with the result that disparities of income and wealth have widened considerably. This phenomenon is more notable in some countries than others but is increasingly a factor of life for many of Europe’s citizens, threatening social cohesion. This is an issue we shall turn to in the section on the digital divide.

Culture and creativity – the cornerstone of the information society

The former Council for Cultural Co-operation’s “New information technologies” project proved to be one of the most fertile areas of publications on the information society. Indeed the Council’s approach to the information society is perhaps most distinctive in the emphasis it places on cultural activities, as opposed to the more market-oriented approach of the European Union or the concern with tools for economic development, expressed by the OECD or World Bank.

Maximising the educational and cultural potential of the new information technologies, published in 1999, accompanied the work leading up to the Council of Europe’s Declaration on a European policy for new information technologies. In addition to restating the Declaration itself, this short booklet makes it very clear the centrality that the Council attaches to the role of culture in any discussion of the information society, a centrality that has not often been echoed in member states or intergovernmental policy:

It is only a slight exaggeration to say that, at least at intergovernmental level, there is a virtual vacuum as regards serious cultural policy contributions approaching the information society from a cultural perspective.

The Culture Committee has attempted to fill that vacuum and its own work has focused on analysing the relationship between culture and digital technologies. Publications from this work have included a systemic look at good practice in Europe in institutions that combine culture, the arts and digital technology; consideration of work in the cultural and creative industries; and an analysis of public access to information and knowledge.

The first of these research projects resulted in *Digital culture in Europe*,¹ which looks at different institutions throughout Europe experimenting with the cultural and educational potential of digital technologies. It presents snapshot information on over fifty models throughout Europe, ranging from new media design agencies and Internet service providers to art galleries and electronic music studios.

Having examined so many institutions and projects, the researchers developed an idea of the common features that successful centres have in common:

- they are medium to large scale in size – offering enough scale for development and large enough to have a stable financial infrastructure. (The latter point is important, but has been severely compromised by the “dot.com crash” much of which took place after this research was concluded.);
- they are multi-operational, full service agencies which deal with several parts of the value chain from creation to production and distribution;
- artistic production is stimulated by in-house media laboratories and purpose-built technical facilities;
- they provide public access and a wide variety of publications and media;
- they act as a platform for discussion and debate.

The booklet describes such centres as the “catalysts of the digital revolution”, and it is clear that even in the wake of the dot-com crash and the subsequent instability of many private-sector new media ventures, the public and community role of such centres remains vital. The notion of a digital revolution may be somewhat contested today – with many preferring to see it as part of a long wave of growth, rather than a sudden dichotomous change. But while access to technology remains partial, and extremely rapid changes in digital technology are making skills obsolescence a real threat to many workers – the role of such centres will remain vital.

1. *Digital culture in Europe – a selective inventory of centers of innovation in the arts and new technologies*, Council of Europe Publishing, 1999.

The changes that digitalisation is making to employment in the cultural industries in Europe was the subject of a set of guidelines set up in 2001.¹ These concern the role of digital technologies in changing employment patterns of cultural work in both the public and private sectors and urge European institutions to see digital technologies not only as an opportunity for economic development and job creation, but also for promoting cultural diversity. Nevertheless, they recognise that digitalisation will change the skill profiles and traditional demarcation between sectors and between occupations – threatening some workers, just as it liberates and empowers others. Training of workers in these sectors on the challenges posed by digitalisation and convergence of media is critical if European cultural organisations are to remain competitive.

The importance of public access, both to technology and to the learning and skills needed to use it was the subject of another Culture Committee sponsored publication, *Vital links for a knowledge culture*.² This concerned itself with the policy issues around the so-called digital divide, but, unlike some earlier discussion of this subject, recognised that the issue is not just about access to technology, but about the underlying inequalities and disadvantages that this differential access reveals.

In the chapter “Introducing the Vital Links project”, the author concludes that the notion of public access is broader than the traditional idea of universal service, as applied to the telecommunications infrastructure. It describes a notion of public access which encompasses:

- meaningful participation enabled by ICT literacy and navigational skills for purposeful and timely use;
- meaningful use as perceived by culturally and linguistically diverse users;
- content, services and support as appropriate for diverse social and cultural contacts and user-skill levels.

Simple connectivity is understood as necessary, but not sufficient for these broader goals.

This booklet stresses the techno-cultural nature of the debate on public access and proposes the use of the term “knowledge culture” to describe the broad

1. Council of Europe “Cultural work in the information society: Guidelines for a European cultural policy”.

2. *Vital links for a knowledge culture: public access to new information and communication technologies*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2001.

environment in which this access operates. It presents some statistics on access to the Internet throughout the world and also looks at the role that community access points – the traditional policy tool – have to play in resolving these evident disparities.

As the opening essay concludes: “More research is needed to fill what we can label a community access gap”. In other words, the reasons for non-use of the Net are not always the obvious ones – cost or lack of connectivity.

The links between Internet use and existing social relationships are important and some research suggests that collective cultural networks allow people indirect access to the Net (via friends, family and so on) even when they do not have direct personal access. But how do we move beyond simple questions of access to the notion of “meaningful use”? British academic, Professor Steve Woolgar,¹ quoted in this booklet, points out that access and use are not the same thing, and that access is not a guarantee of use. In other words, people must have a reason to want to use the Internet; they must have trust in the privacy and security of transactions performed on it and they must be able to navigate purposefully and contextualise what they find.

The question is raised as to why such gaps in access matter? The answer to this is that such gaps are harmful to social cohesion and it proposes a new digital social contract that places a priority on public access to the means of communication, information and production, in the information (or as the report prefers, knowledge) society.

The issue of social cohesion, most commonly referred to as the digital divide in this context has been a primary political pre-occupation of discussions about the information society and is one we explore briefly in the next section.

What is digital about the digital divide? Social cohesion and the information society

The broad issue of social cohesion and unequal access to technology – whether for reasons of class, gender, language or disability – is another area of major concern to the Council. The Malta Conference (Doc. DH MM (2000) 8) in 1999 brought together specialists from more than thirty countries to discuss various types of and approaches to the issue of public access to Internet-type services. The Council’s own position, outlined in Committee of Ministers

1. Steve Woolgar (see : <http://www.vei.co.uk/ebusiness/woolgar/transcript.html>).

Recommendation No. (99) 14 on universal community service concerning new communication and information services, and its supporting explanatory memorandum, was presented at the conference. It recognises that there are three main aspects of public access to Internet services: access, services and knowledge.

Access. Access to Internet terminals can be facilitated by establishing public access points in libraries, educational institutions, public administrations or other places. On this particular point, Recommendation 54 (99) on local and regional information society, adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (see also p. 49) makes an even stronger requirement to member states to provide universal access, if necessary by imposing the obligation on particular operators for providing this. Since this involves not only making access universally available but also offering it at an affordable price, each country is required to decide, according to national requirements, on the scheme to be used to achieve universal service.

Services. The issue of services or content is more complex: news, cultural, educational and entertainment programmes have been the backbone of traditional audiovisual services in Europe, but we assume that transactional and interactive services will become so widespread that they will encourage new interaction between public administrations and citizens.

Knowledge. Users need information and training in order to fully participate in the developing information and communication society.

The recommendation makes a host of specific suggestions on the provision of public access points, dissemination of information of a public and democratic nature and the need for training and education to develop citizen's competences. The notion of "universal service" and its extension to Internet-type services has been widely discussed, but as Professor Robin Mansell concedes in her essay "The deep structure of knowledge societies",¹ while serious disadvantage can result from lack of access to new technologies, the common response to this – more investment in the infrastructure – will not be sufficient to minimise the damage that may result. She goes on to say: "the potential benefits of digital technologies will remain out of reach for many people as long as there is insufficient investment in the social capabilities that they need to engage effectively with others in emerging information-intensive

1. *Vital links for a knowledge culture*, op. cit.

societies". Human capital is the key to success in a more knowledge-based economy and society and developing that capital, by investing in people, is the only way to address the *causes* of the digital divide. Investing purely in technology will just treat the *symptoms*.

Professor Mansell also discuss other aspects of potential exclusion, such as gender. Although women are online in increasing numbers, particularly in countries where relative levels of Internet usage is high, women's participation in higher education courses on information technology or engineering is collapsing in many countries. This causes her to worry about the future design of ICT systems and whether women's lack of participation at this stage will secure exclusion later on.

This issue has been of some concern to the Council and in 1999 the Parliamentary Assembly adopted Recommendation 1435 on the role of women in science and technology. This recommendation puts forth that notwithstanding considerable progress, inequalities concerning the participation of men and women in science and technology continue to exist in Europe. Girls and women face considerable obstacles in pursuing both studies and careers in these fields and there are relatively few women in decision-making and consultative bodies in science and technology. It recommends further research on this field, including a study of the methods of attracting girls to these careers and a study of the measures needed to promote the development of out-of-school science and technology education for girls and women.

While the use of the Internet by women *as users if not producers* is growing, people with disabilities continue to be discriminated against in the design of technologies. While some technologies hold out the hope of full participation in society, others may create new obstacles and new exclusions. This has been the subject of recent work by the Council and was the topic of a presentation at the "Agenda-setting workshop on e-governance" in June 2002.

A paper presented¹ at this workshop revealed that Council of Europe member states include a population of 80 million people with disabilities – defined as those exhibiting one or more of a variety of impairments or disabilities. It went on to argue that ICTs can both alleviate the exclusion of disabled people and create it. In the first case, e-voting illustrates the potential for removing current barriers to inclusion in this part of the democratic process for people

1. "E-Governance: the way towards full citizenship for people with disabilities" (Doc. IPI (2002)8e (addendum)).

with disabilities. The flexibility that ICTs bring, in terms of information presentation and channels of interaction, can remove some or all of the intrinsic barriers to inclusion that accompany our traditional methods of voting. Removing the requirement for travel – for example by enabling online voting at home – is a simple example of how the use of digital technologies can empower those with mobility impairments.

The design of websites is, however, an area which can potentially contribute to the exclusion of people with disabilities. The principles underpinning the organisation of content – in terms of colour, size, navigation techniques, the use of sound and interactivity – have the potential to exclude or include. The potential for increasing exclusion through the inappropriate implementation of new technologies is a growing concern, as the proliferation of these new technologies accelerates. In recognition of this issue, Committee of Ministers Resolution ResAP(2001)3 towards full citizenship of persons with disabilities through inclusive new technologies (24 October 2001) – codifies seven specific principles and eight instruments to deliver on those principles.

Specific principles	Instruments
Accessibility	Legislation and regulations
Ease of use	Design for all
Affordability	User involvement
Awareness	Standardisation
Appropriateness and attractiveness	Centres of excellence
Adaptability	Evaluation
Compatibility	Public procurement policies
	International co-operation

Aside from these principles and instruments that apply to all new technologies, the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), which includes over 500 organisations on a global level, has published guidelines for the creation of websites that have been adopted by European Union member states and institutions, and the United States Access board.

A third group in society, though not one that is traditionally associated with exclusion from new technology, is young people, and they have been the subject of two major publications from the Council of Europe. The first, *Youth in the information society*,¹ contains a selection of papers presented at a symposium organised by the youth and sport sector of the Council of Europe in 1996. The first set of papers centres on visions of the information society, its potential and possibilities as well as its dangers. The paper by Jean-Charles Lagree entitled “Information society: a new source of inequalities”, considers the danger posed by a more flexible, fragmented society where the rewards of greater autonomy may appear to come at the risk of loss of community. Some warned of the dangers of loss of privacy, “dumbing down” by mass culture and the undermining of the public sphere, and others presented a more positive view, though in general the tone was realistic, rather than utopian.

A clear message emerging from the symposium and in the publication was the need to extend access and to establish new teaching methods that can help embed the purposeful uses of technology into the mainstream curriculum. These issues of access and what young people are doing with ICTs was also explored in the report by the Culture Committee’s *New information technologies and the young*.² Examining patterns of usage among young people, how young people are using these technologies in creative activities and the role of education in promoting usage, it reported, among other things, that:

- television remains the most popular technology in use;
- boys are more likely than girls to have a PC at home and make use of it, though mostly for playing games;
- commercial software development is creating job opportunities for young people in most countries;
- digital media has increased the possibilities open to the artist, while dramatically cutting the cost of distribution. This had led to the development of virtual “communities of interest”;
- the education system is playing the major role in developing ICT skills, though most provision is aimed at 14-20 year olds.

Having explored these issues in some detail, the report concludes with issues of concern, many of which will now be familiar to readers of this document,

1. *Youth in the information society*, Council of Europe Publishing, 1997.

2. *New information technologies and the young*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2001.

namely that the information society is suffering from increased polarisation and young people in rural areas or from lower income families are likely to have less access to ICTs than others. Within Europe, both these inequalities are more marked in central and eastern Europe.

Robin Mansell sums up this problem with a quote from Manuel Castells in her *Vital links for a knowledge culture* essay: “there is an extraordinary gap between our technological over-development and our social under-development”. It is clear that a purely market-led development of the information society will exacerbate this polarisation and harm social cohesion. The European model of the information society, as expressed in Council of Europe publications, has social cohesion at its heart and for that, as Professor Mansell points out, we need more than just technology policies – but integration of technological, social, cultural and economic policy development.

Science and technology

Of all the issues covered here and the broad remit of the Council, the combination of digital technology and science, particularly biology, is likely to prove the most controversial and challenging in the decade to come. It is also an area likely to produce the sort of utopian/distopian visions and nightmares we have been trying to avoid.

Some of the most important issues will arise in areas where combinations of technologies are being applied to new ideas. The obvious case is genetics and bioinformatics (ICTs and biology), which are leading to an explosion in the volume of information and potential information that is available on individuals. How this information is managed and used, through data mining, intelligent software agents and knowledge management, will be vital to protect privacy and ensure that what might be called “genetic redlining” or discriminating against individuals on account of their genetic make-up.

Second, in the health field, developments in remote diagnostic equipment and the portability of equipment and communications technology are combining to create a potentially dramatic increase in the provision of home-based care and services. This could have significant implications not only for the structure of the hospital system (combined also with advances in low-impact/minimal-access surgery, thus reducing hospital stays), but also on family and community structures if people are cared for at home.

These developments, in particular their social consequences, are of concern to the Council and are the subject of ongoing research and policy-making. In 1997 the Parliamentary Assembly passed Recommendation 1332 on the scientific and technical aspects of new information and communication technologies. This recommendation was rightly concerned with the “gap between the extent of development of the new ICTs and society’s readiness for them”. And while it encourages member states to do as much as possible in both primary and applied research and in the deployment of new technologies, it also warns that governments need to monitor the implementation of these policies to ensure that they do not harm democratic values.

One way to ensure that this does not happen is to try and make sure that the public is better educated about developments in science and technology, both as part of the formal education system and throughout life. In 1968, the Council published a study by Jean Pradal on the methods used in member states of the Council of Cultural Co-operation to popularise science in writing. The Parliamentary Assembly has adopted Resolution 1075 on scientific and technical co-operation with central and eastern European countries; Recommendation 1435 on the role of women in science and technology (see page 55); and Recommendation 1466 on media education.

Two particular initiatives are of interest here because they touch on the role of ICTs in science and technology. Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1379 concerns basic education in science and technology and urges member states to make it a vital element of education policy. The education of women and girls in this area is particularly important. The recommendation contains ideas for the embedding of science and technology within the school curricula, but also argues that they should form an integral part of informal, lifelong learning, including vocational training.

The Internet and other media are undoubtedly becoming a hugely important conduit of scientific and technical information and in January 2002 the Parliamentary Assembly produced Resolution 1273 (2002) on scientific communication. This resolution ranges over three main areas: information for policy-makers, communication between scientists and information for the general public.

It recognises that the media has a huge role to play in disseminating knowledge of science, but expresses concern that outside of specialist publications which are not widely read, coverage of science in the general media is poor.

This means that stories are often sensationalised, causing unnecessary panic and alarm. As the resolution points out, the scientific community and the media still fail to understand one another. Journalists criticise scientists for not communicating in plain language, while scientists often see journalists as intermediaries who can publicise their work, rather than interpreters who can aid understanding of it.

It recognises the vital role that is now being played by the Internet as a means of scientific discussion and debate, but, along with many others, is concerned with the reliability of scientific information on the Net. To counteract this, it suggests developing a permanent technical platform on the Internet on the model of the American Public Library of Science, hosting scientific archives and fora for exchange on various research topics. This facility allows researchers to contribute free of charge only to those scientific reviews that agree to make their work freely available to the public on their website six months after paper publication. Such an initiative, it is hoped, would help redefine the relationship between researchers and readers while protecting the interests of both.

ICTs and the law

The modernisation of criminal and civil justice system is an issue of concern to most member states and is one where a great degree of experimentation and piloting is currently being carried out. Current and forthcoming changes range from simple issues such as the use of videoconferencing for giving evidence remotely, to the publication of legal texts on the Net and to more advanced software which helps in legislative design and workflow.

In 2002 the Council of Europe prepared a draft recommendation on archiving of electronic documents in the legal sector and a draft recommendation on the interoperability of information systems in the justice sector.

The Council's main publication in this area¹ was the result of the Colloquy on Information Technology and Law (1999) at which the papers presented covered several aspects of the subject. In addition to specific presentations, member states make national reports on the role of ICTs within their justice system. Legal codes, frameworks and methods vary widely across member

1. *Information technologies and the law – linking systems and their users*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2001.

states, but a common theme was the importance of states providing access to legal data in such a way as to facilitate easy use by all citizens.

In addition, the Council has established a recent Convention on Legal Co-operation concerning “Information Society Services” (ETS No. 180). The aim of this is to establish a database within the Council of all legislation concerning ICTs. The convention recognises the need to keep European Union legislation and international law broadly in line on these issues and also to keep member states informed of developments in the whole field of ICTs and the law, including areas such as electronic signatures, online contracts, cybercrime, legal liability of operators and the protection of minors.

CONCLUSIONS

Future work on the information society

Many of the themes discussed above will continue to feature as part of the work programme and interests of the Council of Europe. None of these issues, even those that have been the subject of resolutions or conventions, are settled and most will remain subjects of debate for some time to come.

This focus on democracy and the role of ICTs within it broadens the debate from a technology one to one on society and from a technical paradigm to a techno-cultural one. No where is this more evident than in the Council's approach to e-governance, which we might define as a set of technology-mediated partnerships between government, businesses and the community to deliver social goods, such as education, healthcare or democratic services. The dominant narrative of e-governance uses word such as "citizen" or "inhabitant" to describe people interacting with public organisations, in contrast to more market-oriented terms such as "user" or "customer". These terms connote notions of democracy and community, rather than market or business. They reflect the broader concerns of e-governance, and signal a shift in emphasis from e-enabling service delivery, to changing and improving the networks of engagement that constitute modern civil society.

New ways of working will of course have to be instituted within the bounds of any relevant legislation. They will also be designed with due respect to citizens' concerns about personal privacy. As a result, organisations will be required to navigate successfully the often complex fields of data protection, human rights and freedom of information legislation. They will have to cope flexibly with the perceived trade-off between quality of service and personal data privacy, and chart a safe, balanced and effective path through the competing opportunities and risks that new technologies afford in this context.

The Council's role in this area is already well-developed, but the increasing need for transnational agreements and the possibilities offered by technical solutions, mean this work will continue to be a fruitful area.

One area of information society research, which has been hitherto greatly under-developed, is that of evaluation and impact measurement. The area is full of pilot schemes, trials and research projects, but lacks good, systematic

tools for measuring outcomes and impacts. This is could be a primary component of relevant work on information and communication technology in the coming years.

APPENDIX

Declaration on a European policy for new information technologies

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 May 1999 at its 104th Session)

The Committee of Ministers,

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Council of Europe;

In response to the decision of the Council of Europe's Second Summit to develop a European policy for the application of new information technologies with a view to ensuring respect for human rights, promoting cultural diversity, fostering freedom of expression and information and maximising the educational and cultural potential of these technologies;

Taking into consideration all relevant international texts in this field, including those which have come into being since the Second Summit, notably the political texts adopted in Thessalonika by the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Mass Media Policy (December 1997) and Resolution 53/70 adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations (December 1998);

Conscious of the profound changes brought about by the digitalisation, convergence and continuing globalisation of information networks;

Welcoming the opportunities offered by the new information technologies to promote freedom of expression and information, political pluralism and cultural diversity, and to contribute to a more democratic and sustainable information society;

Recognising the potential of new information technologies to improve openness, transparency and efficiency at all levels – national, regional and local – of the governance, administration and judicial systems of member states and hence to consolidate democratic stability;

Aware also of the potential risks involved in the use of these technologies for both individuals and democratic society;

Convinced that a clear regulatory framework will help to promote those opportunities and avoid those risks;

Acknowledging the important role of the private sector in the creation, development and use of the new information technologies and wishing to foster partnership between the public and private sectors to maximise the benefit of these technologies to their societies;

Convinced that a genuinely democratic information society based on the core values of the Council of Europe can be achieved through a policy framework encouraging access and participation, competence and empowerment, creativity, diversity and ensuring protection;

Urges the governments of member states, acting, where appropriate, with public and private partners,

I. With respect to access to and participation in new information technologies:

- to promote the broadest possible access for all to the new information and communication services, for example through the development of wide-spread access points in public places;
- to enable all individuals to play a more active role in public life, at national, regional and local levels, by using the new information technologies to:
 - provide easy access to information about and direct links to local, regional and national administrative and judicial services;
 - make available official texts of local, regional and national laws and regulations, of international agreements and of the jurisprudence of national and international jurisdictions;
- to encourage the free flow of information, opinions and ideas through the use of the new information technologies;
- to encourage the development, production and distribution of cultural and educational material and its widespread dissemination;
- to encourage effective international co-operation to deliver the benefits of improved access and increased transparency;
- to contribute towards equal possibilities in the use of new technologies for all European countries.

II. With respect to competence and empowerment with regard to new information technologies :

- to promote broad understanding in all sectors of society of the new information technologies and their potential;

- to help individuals to develop competence in the use of new information technologies:
 - through training at all levels of the education system, formal and informal, and throughout life,
 - through the definition of new professional profiles and training curricula;
- thereby to enable individuals to make active, critical and discerning use of these technologies;
- to promote better and wider use of the new information technologies in teaching and learning, paying special attention to gender equality issues;
- to encourage use of information networks in the education field to promote mutual understanding between peoples, both on individual and institutional levels.

III. *With respect to creativity of individuals and of cultural industries:*

- to encourage the use of the new information technologies as a form of artistic and literary expression and as a means of forming creative partnerships, in particular between art, science and industry;
- to stimulate the innate creativity of each individual through media literacy and the development of educational programmes using new information technologies;
- to work, in the context of convergence and continuing globalisation of information networks, with the cultural industries to help ensure that their development enhances creativity;
- to encourage the European cultural industries to work together to increase their creativity and so provide a wide variety, while ensuring the quality of products and services in the information networks.

IV. *With respect to diversity of content and language:*

- to encourage the development of a wide range of communication and information networks, as well as the diversity of content and language, so as to foster political pluralism, cultural diversity and sustainable development ;
- to promote the full use by all, including minorities, of the opportunities for exchange of opinion and self-expression offered by the new information technologies;

- to acknowledge the usefulness of these technologies in enabling all European countries and regions to express their cultural identities;
- to encourage the provision of cultural, educational and other products and services in an appropriate variety of languages and to promote the greatest possible diversity of these products and services;
- to ensure, as far as possible, that information systems, in the administrative and legal fields, offer material which takes account of regional and linguistic criteria and which meets the specific needs of concerned minorities.

V. With respect to protection of rights and freedoms:

- to ensure respect for human rights and human dignity, notably freedom of expression, as well as the protection of minors, the protection of privacy and personal data, and the protection of the individual against all forms of racial discrimination in the use and development of new information technologies, through regulation and self-regulation, and through the development of technical standards and systems, codes of conduct and other measures;
- to adopt national and international measures for the effective investigation and punishment of information technology crimes and to combat the existence of safe havens for perpetrators of such crimes;
- to ensure the effective protection of the rights holders whose works are disseminated on the new information and communication services;
- to encourage the establishment of international standards and safeguards essential for the guarantee of authenticity of electronically transmitted documents and legally binding agreements;
- to enhance this framework of protection, including the development of codes of conduct embodying ethical principles for the use of the new information technologies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Council of Europe conventions and statutory texts

Conventions

Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as amended by Protocol No. 11

Convention on Information and Legal Co-operation concerning “Information Society Services” (ETS No. 180)

Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (ETS No. 108) and Additional Protocol (ETS No. 181)

Convention on Cybercrime (ETS No. 185)

Convention on the Legal protection of Services based on, or consisting of, Conditional Access (ETS No. 178)

Committee of Ministers declarations

Declaration on the freedom of expression and information (1982)

The Budapest Declaration – For a greater Europe without dividing lines (1999)

Declaration on a European policy for new information technologies (Appendix 1 to the Budapest Declaration)

Declaration on cultural diversity (2000)

Committee of Ministers recommendations

Recommendation No. R (81) 1 on regulations for automated medical data banks

Recommendation No. R (83) 10 on the protection of personal data used for scientific research and statistics

Recommendation No. R (85) 20 on the protection of personal data used for the purposes of direct marketing

Recommendation No. R (86) 1 on the protection of personal data used for social security purposes

Recommendation No. R (87) 15 regulating the use of personal data in the police sector

Recommendation No. R (89) 2 on the protection of personal data used for employment purposes

Recommendation No. R (89) 7 concerning principles on the distribution of video games having a violent, brutal or pornographic content

Recommendation No R (89) 9 on computer-related crime

Recommendation No. R (90) 19 on the protection of personal data used for payment and other related operations

Recommendation No. R (91) 10 on the communication to third parties of personal data held by public bodies

Recommendation No. R (92) 15 concerning teaching, research and training in the field of law and information technology

Recommendation No. R (92) 19 on video games with a racist content

Recommendation No. R (95) 4 on the protection of personal data in the area of telecommunication services, with particular reference to telephone services

Recommendation No. R (95) 13 concerning problems of criminal procedural law connected with information technology

Recommendation No. R (96) 10 on the guarantee of the independence of public service broadcasting

Recommendation No. R (97) 5 on the protection of medical data

Recommendation No. R (97) 18 concerning the protection of personal data collected and processed for statistical purposes

Recommendation No. R (97)19 on the portrayal of violence in the electronic media

Recommendation No. R (97) 20 on “Hate Speech”

Recommendation No. R. (99) 5 on the protection of privacy on the Internet

Recommendation No. R (99) 14 on universal community service concerning new communication and information services

Recommendation R (2001) 2 concerning the design and re-design of court systems and legal information systems in a cost-effective manner

Recommendation R (2001) 3 on the delivery of court and other legal services to the citizen through the use of new technologies

Recommendation No. R (2001) 7 on measures to protect copyright and neighbouring rights and combat piracy, especially in the digital environment

Recommendation No. R (2001) 8 on self-regulation concerning cyber content (self-regulation and user protection against illegal or harmful content on new communications and information services)

Recommendation No. R (2002) 1 Guiding principles for sustainable spatial development of the European continent

Recommendation No. R (2002) 2 Access to official documents

Recommendation No. R (2002) 7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to enhance the protection of the neighbouring rights of broadcasting organisations

Committee of Ministers resolutions

Resolution (73) 22 on the protection of the privacy of individuals vis-à-vis electronic data banks in the private sector

Resolution (74) 29 on the protection of privacy of individuals vis-à-vis electronic data banks in the public sector

ResAP (2001) 3 Towards full citizenship for persons with disabilities through inclusive new technologies

Resolution (2002) 12 establishing the European Commission for the efficiency of justice (CEPEJ)

Parliamentary Assembly recommendations

Recommendation 1122 (1990) Revival of the countryside by means of information technology

Recommendation 1314 (1997) New technologies and employment

Recommendation 1332 (1997) Scientific and technological aspects of the new information and communications technologies

Recommendation 1379 (1998) Basic education in science and technology

Recommendation 1435 (1999) Role of women in science and technology

Recommendation 1466 (2000) Media education

Recommendation 1586 (2002) The digital divide and education

Parliamentary Assembly resolutions

Resolution 1075 (1996) Scientific and technical co-operation with central and eastern European countries

Resolution 1120 (1997) Impact of the new communication and information technologies on democracy

Resolution 1121 (1997) Instruments of citizen participation in representative democracy,

Resolution 1191 (1999) Information society and a digital world

Resolution 1273 (2002) Scientific communication

Parliamentary Assembly order

Parliamentary Assembly Dir 531 (1997) Impact of the new communication and information technologies on democracy, 1997

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe recommendation

Recommendation 54 (99) on local and regional information society

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe resolution

Resolution 76 (1999) on local and regional information society

Other references

Barlow, John Perry, *A declaration of the independence of cyberspace*, see: <http://www.eff.org>

Council of Europe, *Advanced information technologies: the impact on training*, Studies and Texts No. 26, Council of Europe Publishing, 1992.

- Council of Europe, “Analysis of the replies to the questionnaire on the democratic potential of the new communication and information services”, 19 March 2002 (Doc. MM-S-OD (2002) 1)
- Council of Europe, “Cultural work within the information society: Guidelines for a European cultural policy” (DGIV/CULT/NTI/qual (2001)
- Council of Europe, *Digital culture in Europe – a selective inventory of centres of innovation in the arts and technologies*, Council of Europe Publishing, 1999
- Council of Europe, “E-governance: the way towards full citizenship for people with disabilities” (Doc. IP1 (2002)8e (addendum))
- Council of Europe, “Explanatory report on the Convention on the Legal Protection of services based on, or consisting of Conditional Access” (2000)
- Council of Europe, “Exploratory meeting on e-voting”, July 2002 (Doc. IP1 (2002) 17e)
- Council of Europe, “Freedom of expression and the communications networks” (Doc. CC-Cult (98)18)
- Council of Europe “Freedom of expression and the right to privacy”, Conference Reports, September 1999, (Doc. DH-MM (2000) 7)
- Council of Europe, “General policy recommendation No. 6 on combating the dissemination of racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic material via the Internet”, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, 2001
- Council of Europe, *Information technologies in schools: reasons and strategies for investment*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2000
- Council of Europe, *Information technology and the law – linking systems and their users*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2001
- Council of Europe, *The impact of new technologies on the quality of life of persons with disabilities*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2002
- Council of Europe, *Local and regional information society, Proceedings, Helsinki, January 1998*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2000
- Council of Europe, *Local and regional information society, Proceedings, Miercurea Ciuc*, (Studies and Texts No. 64) October 1998, Council of Europe Publishing 2000

Council of Europe, *Maximising the educational and cultural potential of the new information technologies*, Council of Europe Publishing, 1999

Council of Europe, *New information technologies and the young*, Council of Europe Publishing, September 2001

Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly report, “Impact of new technologies on labour legislation” (Doc 8751) 2000

Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly report, “Information society and a digital world” (Doc. 8400) 1999

Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly report, “Scientific communication” (Doc. 9300) 2001

Council of Europe, *Public access and freedom of expression in networked information: guidelines for a European cultural policy*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2001

Council of Europe, “Report on the agenda-setting workshop on e-governance” (Doc. IP(2002)18)

Council of Europe, *A virtual new world?*, Council of Europe Publishing, 1998

Council of Europe, *Vital links for a knowledge culture: public access to new information and communications technologies*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2001

Council of Europe, *Youth in the information society*, Council of Europe Publishing, 1997

Coyle, Diane and Danny Quah, *Getting the measure of the new economy, iSociety*, Work Foundation, London, 2002

Horne, Mathew, *Enterprise learning*, Demos, London 2000

Huws, U. and N. Jagger and P. Bates, *Where the butterfly alights: the global location of e-work*, EC Emergence project, IES, Brighton, 2001

“Learning to let go” in *Education futures*, Design Council & RSA, London, 1999

Lessig, Lawrence, *The future of ideas – the fate of the commons in a connected world*, Random House, New York, 2001

New media and social exclusion, Hansard Society, July 2000, see: <http://www.hansard-society.org.uk>

OECD, *OECD Economic outlook 68*, OECD Paris, 2000

OECD, *Puma policy brief No. 10: Engaging citizens in policy-making*, OECD, Paris, 2001

PricewaterhouseCoopers European Economic Outlook, 2001, see: <http://www.pwcglobal.com/gx/eng/ins-sol/spec-int/eo/>

“The rise and persistence of the technological community ideal”, in Werry and Mowbray (eds) *Online communities*, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 2001

Shirky, Clay, *Weblogs and the mass amateurisation of publishing*, see: <http://www.shirky.com>

Unesco, World Commission on Culture and Development, *In from the margins* (1997)

United States Internet Council (USIC) and International Trade and Technology Associations, *State of the Internet, 2000*, see: <http://www.itta.com/internet2000.htm>

Woolgar, Steve, see: <http://www.vei.co.uk/ebusiness/woolgar/transcript.html>

Publications from the integrated project “Making democratic institutions work”

Going for gender balance (2002)

ISBN 92-870-4901-1

Women’s individual voting rights – a democratic requirement (2002)

ISBN 92-871-5040-0

“Making democratic institutions work”

Website: <http://www.coe.int/democracy>

Sales agents for publications of the Council of Europe Agents de vente des publications du Conseil de l'Europe

AUSTRALIA/AUSTRALIE

Hunter Publications, 58A, Gipps Street
AUS-3066 COLLINGWOOD, Victoria
Tel.: (61) 3 9417 5361
Fax: (61) 3 9419 7154
E-mail: Sales@hunter-pubs.com.au
<http://www.hunter-pubs.com.au>

BELGIUM/BELGIQUE

La Librairie européenne SA
50, avenue A. Jonnart
B-1200 BRUXELLES 20
Tel.: (32) 2 734 0281
Fax: (32) 2 735 0860
E-mail: info@libeurop.be
<http://www.libeurop.be>

Jean de Lannoy

202, avenue du Roi
B-1190 BRUXELLES
Tel.: (32) 2 538 4308
Fax: (32) 2 538 0841
E-mail: jean.de.lannoy@euronet.be
<http://www.jean-de-lannoy.be>

CANADA

Renouf Publishing Company Limited
5369 Chemin Canotek Road
CDN-OTTAWA, Ontario, K1J 9J3
Tel.: (1) 613 745 2665
Fax: (1) 613 745 7660
E-mail: order.dept@renoufbooks.com
<http://www.renoufbooks.com>

CZECH REPUBLIC/ RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE

Suweco Cz Dovož Tisku Praha
Ceskomoravska 21
CZ-18021 PRAHA 9
Tel.: (420) 2 660 35 364
Fax: (420) 2 683 30 42
E-mail: import@suweco.cz

DENMARK/DANEMARK

GAD Direct
Fiolstaede 31-33
DK-1171 COPENHAGEN K
Tel.: (45) 33 13 72 33
Fax: (45) 33 12 54 94
E-mail: info@gadirect.dk

FINLAND/FINLANDE

Akateeminen Kirjakauppa
Keskuskatu 1, PO Box 218
FIN-00381 HELSINKI
Tel.: (358) 9 121 41
Fax: (358) 9 121 4450
E-mail: akatilaus@stockmann.fi
<http://www.akatilaus.akateeminen.com>

FRANCE

La Documentation française
(Diffusion/Vente France entière)
124, rue H. Barbusse
F-93308 AUBERVILLIERS Cedex
Tel.: (33) 01 40 15 70 00
Fax: (33) 01 40 15 68 00
E-mail: commandes.vel@ladocfrancaise.gouv.fr
<http://www.ladocfrancaise.gouv.fr>

Librairie Kléber (Vente Strasbourg)
Palais de l'Europe
F-67075 STRASBOURG Cedex
Fax: (33) 03 88 52 91 21
E-mail: librairie.kleber@coe.int

GERMANY/ALLEMAGNE

AUSTRIA/AUTRICHE
UNO Verlag
Am Hofgarten 10
D-53113 BONN
Tel.: (49) 2 28 94 90 20
Fax: (49) 2 28 94 90 222
E-mail: bestellung@uno-verlag.de
<http://www.uno-verlag.de>

GREECE/GRÈCE

Librairie Kauffmann
28, rue Stadiou
GR-ATHINAI 10564
Tel.: (30) 1 32 22 160
Fax: (30) 1 32 30 320
E-mail: ord@otenet.gr

HUNGARY/HONGRIE

Euro Info Service
Hungexpo Europa Kozpont ter 1
H-1101 BUDAPEST
Tel.: (361) 264 8270
Fax: (361) 264 8271
E-mail: euroinfo@euroinfo.hu
<http://www.euroinfo.hu>

ITALY/ITALIE

Libreria Commissionaria Sansoni
Via Duca di Calabria 1/1, CP 552
I-50125 FIRENZE
Tel.: (39) 556 4831
Fax: (39) 556 41257
E-mail: licosa@licosa.com
<http://www.licosa.com>

NETHERLANDS/PAYS-BAS

De Lindeboom Internationale Publikaties
PO Box 202, MA de Ruyterstraat 20 A
NL-7480 AE HAAKSBERGEN
Tel.: (31) 53 574 0004
Fax: (31) 53 572 9296
E-mail: lindeboo@worldonline.nl
<http://home-1-worldonline.nl/~lindeboo/>

NORWAY/NORVÈGE

Akademika, A/S Universitetsbokhandel
PO Box 84, Blindern
N-0314 OSLO
Tel.: (47) 22 85 30 30
Fax: (47) 23 12 24 20

POLAND/POLOGNE

Główna Księgarnia Naukowa
im. B. Prusa
Krakowskie Przedmiescie 7
PL-00-068 WARSZAWA
Tel.: (48) 29 22 66
Fax: (48) 22 26 64 49
E-mail: inter@internews.com.pl
<http://www.internews.com.pl>

PORTUGAL

Livraria Portugal
Rua do Carmo, 70
P-1200 LISBOA
Tel.: (351) 13 47 49 82
Fax: (351) 13 47 02 64
E-mail: liv.portugal@mail.telepac.pt

SPAIN/ESPAGNE

Mundi-Prensa Libros SA
Castelló 37
E-28001 MADRID
Tel.: (34) 914 36 37 00
Fax: (34) 915 75 39 98
E-mail: libreria@mundiprensa.es
<http://www.mundiprensa.com>

SWITZERLAND/SUISSE

BERSY
Route de Monteiller
CH-1965 SAVIESE
Tel.: (41) 27 395 53 33
Fax: (41) 27 395 53 34
E-mail: jprausis@netplus.ch

Adeco – Van Diermen
Chemin du Lacuez 41
CH-1807 BLONAY
Tel.: (41) 21 943 26 73
Fax: (41) 21 943 36 05
E-mail: info@adeco.org

UNITED KINGDOM/ROYAUME-UNI

TSO (formerly HMSO)
51 Nine Elms Lane
GB-LONDON SW8 5DR
Tel.: (44) 207 873 8372
Fax: (44) 207 873 8200
E-mail: customer.services@theso.co.uk
<http://www.the-stationery-office.co.uk>
<http://www.itsofficial.net>

UNITED STATES and CANADA/ ÉTATS-UNIS et CANADA

Manhattan Publishing Company
468 Albany Post Road, PO Box 850
CROTON-ON-HUDSON,
NY 10520, USA
Tel.: (1) 914 271 5194
Fax: (1) 914 271 5856
E-mail: Info@manhattanpublishing.com
<http://www.manhattanpublishing.com>

Council of Europe Publishing/Éditions du Conseil de l'Europe

F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

Tel.: (33) 03 88 41 25 81 – Fax: (33) 03 88 41 39 10 – E-mail: publishing@coe.int – Website: <http://book.coe.int>