Kainan University
Fall 2004 Term

Information and Communications Policy

Class meets Thursdays, 9:00 AM - 12:00 noon
Office hours – Thursdays 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM   Vice President Office – N 502
And by appointment.

Instructor
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The purpose of this course is to introduce and familiarize graduate students with existing and future options and alternatives to *Information Society and information and communications technologies (ICT)*, and to identify and analyze policies and politics that support or hinder movement toward this (*utopian?*) goal. This course will provide a broad survey for public policy students interested in pursuing a career in the policy and regulatory arena concerning information technology, media content, constitutional and privacy issues, issues regarding equity and access to information and its technologies.

Countless global electronic networks have reshaped society, transforming institutions and creating instability for individuals. The result has been that individuals, cut adrift from traditional rules of local society and from the security of stable economic support, are forced to craft identities on their own, with one foot in the local physical world and the other in the global virtual world. People are lost and they sense it, but they don't know what it is. For many, there is no connection, no understanding,

between what happens in their lives and what's happening in the world. This course will try to provide enough data and interpretation for people to understand the transformation.

Moreover, technology and policy vary significantly on many dimensions. Simple explanations of how information technology impact organization, society and humanity are rarely possible. Particularly, the impact of information technology and Internet has been fruitfully studied by a wide variety of disciplines because it contains facets amendable to study different ways. As a result, the study of these issues in this class will borrow from such disciplines as managing information technology, organization theory, sociology, human behavior, political science, business history, law, journalism and broadcasting. Although the general focus is on the Internet, each of the other disciplines would have useful contributions to make.

Course Description

Should information society policy and its components—those involving information, knowledge, skills, literacy, media, public education, research and development, communication technology and telecommunications infrastructure—be among the primary public policy goals of any society that wishes to become or remain competitive in a rapidly developing, interdependent world where, increasingly, information is available in digital forms on interactive networks and electronic gadgets, and, moreover, where having the right (or relevant) information, skill or knowledge at the right time (e.g., timely or when needed) gives an individual, group, organization, community, region or nation state strategic advantages over their competition? If not, then why not? By the end of the course, we hope to achieve a subtle but sophisticated understanding of the links between information technology, business, organizations and government.

What exactly is *Information Society* anyway and what does the term imply? Is it the same thing as *globalization* or the *Americanization* of the world?

"Information Society" is the term that is used to capture the increasing contemporary influence of information and communication technologies (ICTs). If a government does not have a focused national information policy *per se*, can it simply get by with a mixture of *ad hoc* rules, regulations, laws and public policies that may well be obsolete and/or inappropriate for the country and its citizens and workers in a digital communication age where advantage goes to those who are *hyper-adaptive*?

What is the role of information and communication policy regarding national defense, civil liberty, civic society, freedom of expression, democracy, skills acquisition, competitiveness, public health, equity, justice, self-realization, art, public health, and the distribution of government services, etc.?

What is information? Who owns information? Who owns media? Who owns intellectual property? What difference does ownership of information content, communication conduits, and mass media make anyway?

Information: there is no universal definition of this concept. Sometimes it is used as a synonym to data or knowledge. If we consider the verb "to inform", i.e. to convey something new, the specificity becomes clearer. To get information means to get an answer to a question. A message can become information without a question if this message changes the user's picture of the world...

--Russian Information Society

If freedom of expression, universal access to public information content, and efficient government services are key long-term policy goals of a society, what kinds of information public policies ought to be pursued and what kinds ought to be avoided?

How much personal privacy should an individual reasonably expect in a time of national crisis or permanent war on terror?

What is the appropriate role of public service media in an era of channel abundance coupled with media ownership concentration and where self-censorship is legal and the most effective form of censorship that deprives the public of its ability to be informed and self-governed? How can minority voices and viewpoints be effectively heard in Information Society?

Who decides these issues anyway? What are the processes and politics that realize desired *public interest,* democratic, public policy outcomes? What are the alternative ways of making information policy?

If you've read this far, you have noticed that there are lots of questions and no answers provided. Raising and discussing these issues and searching for appropriate answers, or, at least, answers that could better serve the public interest is the grist of this course. Conversations and even arguments tend to be topical, relevant, informative and interesting. **This course will attempt make you** *think different* **and reexamine your prior assumptions about** *information, knowledge and power.*

"Content in news, educational, cultural and entertainment programmes, songs, games ... play a pivotal role in the building of the Information Society. Therefore the creation, production and formulation of content must be encouraged at all levels, not only at the national level of all developing countries but, within the same nation, at the local and

community levels, to ensure that developing nations do not remain information consumers of a content conceived by others.

– *Thabo Mbeki*

This is a very large order for one semester course.   But if we are successful, each of us will gain insights and skills that will help steer a sensible course through a set of issues surrounding the use of information technology, which, although very important, is sometimes complex and confusing.   We will include the following subjects for the in-class coverage:

New age propaganda and disinformation
Digital media convergence
Telecommunication implosion
Intellectual Property/copyright/digital right management
Managing information technologies (Cases Studies)
E-commerce and mobile commerce
National/global information policy
Cyberspace Privacy and human rights
National ID/central data bank
E-democracy and Internet voting
E-literacy and civic literacy
Creative commons and digital divide
Appropriate technologies

For students

In the old economy, a curriculum was good for years and careers.   In the new economy, to be relevant the education system must constantly change content, instructional tools, and approaches.   The best way to appreciate the organizational implications of information technology is through intensive and thoughtful discussions in the classroom.   In lieu of a schedule of dry, boring lectures, informed discussions and dialogue between and among the students and instructor is desired and encouraged.   Classes will proceed on the assumption that everyone has done the readings and has opinions and perspectives worth sharing.   The instructor will, from time to time, introduce new material via e-mailings or distributions of articles that will supplement, compliment, and make current the topics under review.

Robust class participation (i.e., preparation, presence, promptness, and regular participation) is important and required.   Few questions to entertain when preparing

for in-class discussion:

- **Where, When, Who, What are the relevant facts and opinions described in the subject matter?**
- **What's going on and how did this situation evolve?**
- **How do you interpret and explain the events and issues you've observed in the case?**
- **Why do you conclude that? Where is there any evidence for what you say? That's just the opposite of what student X said.**
- **What issues do you consider most important? How would you rank order them in terms of actions to be taken?**
- **What would you do if you were in his/her shoes?**
- **What do you think is going to happen in this case? Where is this all going to end up?**
- **What general conclusions can you draw from this case and this discussion? How would you summarize the three most critical things you've learned from all this?**

Students are encouraged to form small study groups to discuss the readings before and after class. Do aspire to understand the fundamentals of the worldwide shift toward information intensive economies, to tell what is ripe from what is hype in nets, internets, intranets, and webs and to grasp how competitors, courts, customers, experts, innovators, investors, legislators, regulators and trend surfers interact in the real world to channel change in its intertwined economic, political and technological dimensions.

You will be assigned to a Team.

> **NOTE:** If you are sure you will take this course, please notify instructor via email at michael@mail.knu.edu.tw as soon as possible following Shopping Day. **Include your email address and full name in the text of the message.** This will facilitate information sharing and communication with instructor and among all students of the class throughout the semester.

Required Readings:

> *The Information Society: A Sceptical View,* Christopher May, Polity Press, 2002, ISBN: 0-7456-2685-8.
>
> *Global Media Governance: A Beginner's Guide,* Sean O'Siochru and Bruce Girard, with Amy Mahan, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002, ISBN: 0-7425-1566-4.

The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications, Paul Starr, Basic Books, 2004, ISBN: 0-465-08193-2.

The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the 21ˢᵗ Century, Robert W. McChesney, Monthly Review Press, 2004, ISBN: 1-58367-105-6.

Recommended Readings:

The Information Society: An Introduction, Armand Mattelart, Sage Publications, 2003, ISBN: 0-76194947X.

Toward an Information Bill of Rights & Responsibilities, Charles M. Firestone and Jorge Reina Schement, The Aspen Institute, Communications and Society Program, 1995, ISBN: 0-89843-172-7.

Foundations of Communications Policy: Principles and Process in the Regulation of Electronic Media, Philip M. Napoli, Hampton Press, Inc., 2001, ISBN: 1-57273-343-8.

The New Media Monopoly, Ben H. Bagdikian, Beacon Press, 2004, ISBN: 0-8070-6187-5.

Global Information and World Communication, Hamid Mowlana, Sage Publications, 2ⁿᵈ edition, 1997, ISBN: 0-7619-5257-8.

Virtual Inequality: Beyond the Digital Divide, Karen Mossberger, Caroline Tolbert, and Mary Stansbury, Georgetown University Press, 2003, ISBN: 0-87840-999-8.

The Age of Access: The New Culture of Hyper-Capitalism Where All of Life is a Paid-For Experience, Jeremy Rifkin, Tarcher/Putnam, 2000, ISBN: 1-58542-018-2.

E-Rulemaking: Information Technology and Regulatory Policy: New Directions in Digital Government Research, Cary Coglianese, Center for Business and Government, KSG, Harvard. 2004.

People Networks Power: Communications Technology and the New International Politics, David Bollier, The Aspen Institute Communications and Society Program, 2004, ISBN: 0-89843-396-7.

Swimming Lessons: Keeping Afloat in the Age of Technology, David Ehrenfeld, Oxford University Press, 2002, ISBN: 0-19-514852-5.

Learning to Bridge the Digital Divide: Schooling for Tomorrow, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Centre for Educational Research and Innovation and National Center on Adult Literacy (NACL), 2000.

The Entertainment Economy: How Mega-Media Forces Are Transforming Our Lives, Michael J. Wolf, Times Books-Random House, 1999, ISBN:

0-8129-3042-8.

Public Broadcasting and the Public Interest, Michael P. McCauley, Eric E. Peterson, B. Lee Artz, and DeeDee Haleck, editors, M.E. Sharp, 2003, ISBN: 0-7656-0991-6.

Propaganda Inc.: Selling America's Culture to the World, Nancy Snow, Seven Stories Press, 2nd edition, 2002, ISBN: 1-5832-2539-0.

Easily Led: A History of Propaganda, Oliver Thomson, Sutton Publishing, 1999, ISBN: 0-7509-1965-5.

Democracy in the Digital Age: Challenges to Political Life in Cyberspace, Anthony G. Wilhelm, Routledge, 2000, ISBN: 0-415-92436-7.

The Digital Dilemma: Intellectual Property in the Information Age, Computer Science and Telecommunications Board, National Research Council, National Academy Press, 2000, ISBN: 0-309-06499-6.

Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity, Lawrence Lessig, The Penguin Press, 2004, ISBN: 1-59420-06-8.

The Ontology of Cyberspace: Philosophy, Law, and the Future of Intellectual Property, David R. Koepsell, Open Court Publishers, 2000, ISBN: 0-8126-9537-2.

Owning the Future: Inside the Battles to Control the New Assets—Genes, Software, Databases, and Technological Know-how—That Make Up the Lifeblood of the New Economy, Seth Shulman, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999, ISBN: 0-395-84175-5.

"**Copyright as Cultural Policy,**" Michael S. Shapiro, Center for Arts and Culture, 2001.

Digital Broadcasting and the Public Interest, Charles M. Firestone and Amy Korzick Garmer, Editors, The Aspen Institute, Communications and Society Program, 1998.

Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media, Michael Parenti, St. Martin's Press, 1986, ISBN: 0-312-43474.

Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business, Neil Postman, Penguin Books, 1986, ISBN: 0-1400-9438-5.

Global Information and World Communication: New Frontiers in International Relations, Hamid Mowlana, Longman Inc., 1986, ISBN: 0-582-28519-4.

The Future of Ideas: The Fate of the Commons in a Connected World, Lawrence Lessig, Vintage Books, 2002, ISBN: 0-375-72644-6.

Telecommunications Law and Policy, Stuart Minor Benjamin, Douglas Gary

Lichtman and Howard A. Shelanski, Carolina Academic Press, with
cumulative supplements.

The Success and Failure of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, Mark Lloyd,
Editor, Center for Reflective Community Practice (MIT) and Leadership
Conference Education Fund, 2002.

The New Information Infrastructure: Strategies for U.S. Policy, William J.
Drake, Editor, *In Service of the Truth and the Common Good: The Impact of
Media on Global Peace and Conflict,* Frank Walton, The Aspen Institute
Communications and Society Program, 2004, ISBN: 0-89843-412-2.
0-521-00977-4.

Recommended Websites for Understanding Information Society:

http://www.mediaaccess.org   Website of The Media Access Project, a non-profit,
public interest law firm which promotes the public's First Amendment right to hear
and be heard on the electronic media of today and tomorrow.

http://www.democraticmedia.org/index.html   Website of the Center for Digital
Democracy, a nonprofit organization committed to preserving the openness and
diversity of the Internet in the broadband era, and to realizing the full potential of
digital communications through the development and encouragement of
noncommercial, public interest programming.

http://www.commondreams.org/   Breaking news and views for the Progressive
Community.

http://www.alternet.org/   Website of AlterNet, a highly acclaimed Internet
information source that provides readers with crucial facts and passionate opinions
they can't find anywhere else.

http://www.media-alliance.org/   Media Alliance is a 27-year-old media
resource and advocacy center for media workers, non-profit organizations, and social
justice activists whose mission is excellence, ethics, diversity, and accountability in all
aspects of the media in the interests of peace, justice, and social responsibility.

http://www.fair.org /   Website of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), the
national media watch group, which has been offering well-documented criticism of
media bias and censorship since 1986.

**http://www.wsis.nl/static/FAQ's%20about%20WSIS%20and%20Information%
20Society.html**   Website about the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society
http://www.mediachannel.org   Website of Media Channel, a media issues
supersite, featuring criticism, breaking news, and investigative reporting from
hundreds of organizations worldwide.

http://www.bear-left.com/links.html   Excellent Link-library of the three-year

old independent left-leaning web sites about ideas and politics.

http://islandia.law.yale.edu/isp /   Yale Law School's Information Society Project for Democracy and Civil Liberties for a New Age website.

http://europa.eu.int/information society/index en.htm European Information Society website

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/ev.php?URL ID=7277&URL DO=DO TOPIC&URL SECTION=201&reload=1048272936   UNESCO's Observatory of the Information Society:

http://www.itu.int/wsis/basic/about.html   and   http://www.itu.int/wsis/ andhttp://www.irfd.org/events/wf2003/topics.html   International Technology Union's (ITU) World Summit on the Information Society Website.

http://www.kouvola.fi/domino/webbi/sis.nsf/db707a054af18a0e42256a24002a2a1 7/8a4c9dabd5a3f5d442256a68002c921e/$FILE/sisbroch.pdf Sustainable Information Society—Values and Everyday Life (Finland).

http://www.stat.fi/tk/yr/tietoyhteiskunta/suomalaiset en.html   and http://www.stat.fi/tk/yr/tttiede en.html   The Finns and the Information Society.

http://www.stat.fi/tk/yr/tietoyhteiskunta/nordic iss 02.pdf   Nordic Information Society Statistics.

http://www.idc.dk/products/Factsheets/Factsheets 2002/ISI.htm Information Society Index 2002 – The Nordic Paragon.

http://www.swedishembassy.ca/ news/00000009.htm   Sweden takes the lead in embracing the information society (April 2003).

http://www.crisinfo.org/live/index.php   Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS).

http://www.g7.fed.us/   G8 Global Information Society:

http://www.ifla.org/II/g7.htmG-7   Information Society Resources: Information Policy website.

http://www.stat.fi/tk/yr/tttiede en.html   European Commission Information Society RTD Standardization Activity website.

http://www.dgroups.org/groups/IS/docs/aim.html   Information Society: Voices from the South General Information website.

Your performance will be assessed as follows:

Participation in class and on website forum: 50%

One (group) term paper: 25%

One (group) term presentation: 25%