#1.The nature of the information society: An industrialized world perspective

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What Does the 21ˢᵗ Century 'Information Society' Mean for All of Us?

Professor Robin Mansell,

Olugbenga Adesida and Allison Murray

London School of Economics

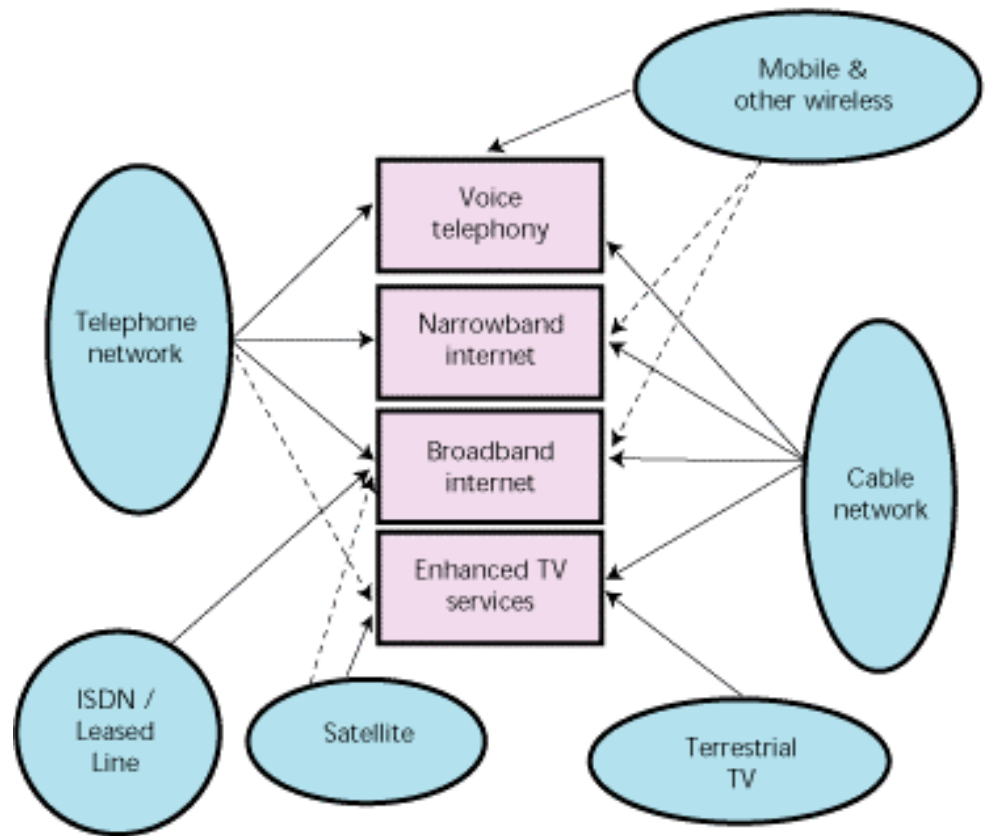# Issues for 21st century information societies

- 'Knowledge-driven' growth

- ICT diffusion pathways

- Regulatory and policy priorities

- ICT partnerships

Fostering 'knowledge-driven' growth

- The race to competitiveness

- Develop 'information society' visions

- ICTs as 'tools' have consequences

- Technology diffusion and markets often come first

ICT infrastructures and market-led developments

The technological landscape is complex, investment is needed, and markets do matter.

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What should come first?

- General economic and social development priorities
- Consequences of intense technological mediation
  - ICT systems and human networks
  - Information exchange and sharing
  - Learning and capabilities

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Towards distinctive information societies

- ICT pathways are highly differentiated

- Some ICTs are valued; some are not

- Legitimacy of some forms of resistance

ICT diffusion pathways

- ICT investment must coincide with investment in people
- Build confidence and trust
- Provide 'off-line' and 'on-line' services
- Take account of non-users of the Internet
- Citizens do value their 'off-line' lives

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The main message for information societies

- ICT diffusion depends on many social, economic, political, cultural, organisational factors

- This is a simple message!

- There is a high cost

Priorities for regulation and policy

- Encourage competition in some markets and universal access

- Address Internet interconnection and peering arrangements

- Conventional forms of regulation should not overwhelm key measures for learning

Invest in learning

- Invest in skills and competencies

- Expand learning opportunities to alleviate exclusion

- Realise that ICTs are not the full answer

Partnerships for inclusive information societies

- Multi-stakeholder partnerships

- Small numbers of partners are local companies

- Many are civil society organisations

- Build capacity as a high priority

Partnerships mean new challenges

- Connect investment to social and economic development goals

- Requires genuine commitment and 'buy-in'

- 'Strategy fatigue' and high risk of cynicism

Building information societies

- Let stakeholders shape their information societies

- Address 'ICT for development' partnership issues: risk, scale and absorption capacity

- ICTs are enablers; they are not solutions to deeper problems