

Preface

This book represents a long journey started in 2005 towards understanding the spatiality of the Internet. The first step in the journey was when, as a masters student at the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS), Newcastle University, I was inspired by a lecture given by Andy Gillespie on Internet geography. Because of my prior research experience in transport infrastructure and regional development, I was amazed by the idea that the Internet could be approached as a physical spatial system. But most importantly, I was fascinated by the complex relationship between this technical system and geographical space. Studying the limited, but still exciting relevant literature, not only did I start gaining a better understanding of this “black box”, aka the Internet, and its relationship with space, but most importantly, I discovered research gaps, especially in the quantification of the spatiality of the Internet, most of which are discussed in this book. Andy provided guidance on this research and I am grateful for his support and inspiration.

The next big milestone was my collaboration with Peter Nijkamp, to whom I am also grateful. Over the last two years, 2011–12, I have had the privilege of working with him at the Department of Spatial Economics at VU Amsterdam. Working with Peter has been a great opportunity to advance and further expand – both in depth and in scope – my research in digital geographies. Most importantly, this collaboration enabled me to channel my research towards the wider area of spatial economics and regional science.

In total, the present book provides a solid overview of my work in understanding and modeling the spatiality of the Internet infrastructure in Europe. Various papers have been published in peer-reviewed journals and some of them provide the basis of the empirical analysis of this book. More specifically, the analysis of Chapter 5 is based on the paper published in *Environment and Planning A*, 43 (2), pp.378–92 (Pion Ltd, London, www.envplan.com) entitled “The topology and the emerging urban geographies of the Internet backbone and aviation networks in Europe: a comparative study” (Tranos 2011). In addition, Chapter 7 is based on a paper published in *Spatial Economic Analysis*, 7 (3) 319–37 (www.tandfonline.com) under the title “The causal effect of the Internet infrastructure

on the economic development of the European city-regions” (Tranos 2012).

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*Emmanouil Tranos
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To the memory of my father,
who taught me to enquire

