

Preface

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have enabled us to enjoy a variety of applications and services through a diverse range of network technologies. With innovative progress in wired and wireless broadband technologies and devices, we are now greatly benefitting from new forms of services such as social networking and cloud computing services. We can easily access an abundant array of information that helps us seek out ways to live in comfort. In addition, as a consequence of the advancement of ICT applications, our society is ready to plunge into a new phase in which big data and open data are formed and processed so as to create innovative changes in value. ‘Smart revolution’ is defined as a term that symbolises such a dramatic change.

The objective of this book is to present a comprehensive evaluation of the smart revolution, including its social and economic impacts. It proposes a modern framework to help assess how recent progress in ICT can contribute to societies as a whole. The authors offer a guide to how advanced network societies have been realised through market mechanisms with the assistance of governmental policies that complement the deficiencies of this mechanism and foster the penetration of ICT. Through ICT, we are connected with each other more at both a personal and a global level, and this will ultimately herald a new era of ICT that will shape the ‘digital society’.

This book addresses the following key questions and seeks to help readers understand what aspects are important in the digital society:

- How does the smart revolution impact economies and people’s way of life?
- How has the ICT ecosystem been developed, and should changes be in accordance with the smart revolution?
- How are consumers’ interests threatened by the smart revolution, and how should they be protected?
- How does the smart revolution create new environments for businesses and how does it affect stakeholders?
- How should the smart revolution enhance innovation and in so doing what kind of policies and deregulation should accompany it?

This book highlights a variety of issues including policies, economics, business and social issues that form the smart revolution, based on global experiences accumulated through the activities of the International Telecommunications Society (ITS). It is expected that it will stimulate future discussions on the smart revolution and contribute to the reformation of info-communications policies and business strategies.

While the planning of this book is rooted in the Silver Lining Conference of the ITS held in Tokyo in 2010, it presents an entirely original treatment, including reflections on dramatic events such as policies for emergency ICT systems against the background of the 2011 Japan earthquake. Similarly, other content is devoted to many of the recent innovative changes in ICT.

The publication plan of this book was able to overcome difficulties caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011. Given the fact that, even after a two-year absence, the contributors to this book willingly responded to the book proposal, the editors would like to express heartfelt gratitude to them. The editors also express their warm thanks to PhD candidates Maria Massaro, Chalmers University of Technology, Nahoko Mitsuyama and Soonbo Nicholas Woo, Waseda University. Their editorial support work was extremely helpful.

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