Research Process and Connectivity in the Information Society

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Abstract:
One of the key objectives of the "Past, Present and Future" conference was to inject a note of realism in the run up to phase two of the World Summit on the Information Society. This might seem strange, given that the original sponsor of the event, the Society for Social Studies of Science, is an international, professional association whose members are often thought to advocate various forms of social constructivism. The conference brought together active scholars, who do research on global and national ICT issues, with policy makers, program managers, and senior organizational leaders. One of the constants throughout the three days of the meeting is not any particular theoretical, organizational, or ideological advocacy, but an overarching sense that the past, present, and future of research in an information society must include not only innovations in information technologies themselves, but also the ways in which these technologies interact with and are constituted by the social, political, and developmental contexts in which they are embedded. The "seamless web" of science, technology, and society was never more apparent than in the variety of presentations that follow.