

Abstract.

In this article a range of national and international policies, many tied to electronic business and electronic government initiatives, are reviewed from the much older perspective of the Information Society. As a concept, the Information Society has retained a form of residual currency but while not quite dormant, it has been overshadowed by what are essentially techno-economic New Economy perspectives. Although these techno-economic priorities can be viewed as contributing to the ultimate development of an Information Society, this contribution continues to fall somewhat short of what would be deemed sufficient. The shortfalls are particularly evident in the case of socially disadvantaged members of the community. In reviewing such developments mainly in Europe but with examples drawn from elsewhere, progress towards Information Society status is assessed in a social context that illustrates the gap that exists between aspiration and achievement in this regard.

Keywords: Digital Divide; e-government; Information Society; social disadvantage; technological and social perspectives