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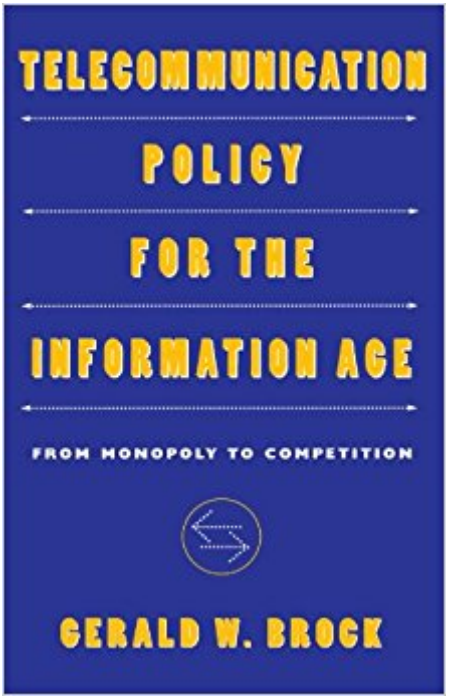
Telecommunication Policy For The Information Age: From Monopoly To Competition



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Synopsis

Gerald Brock develops a new theory of decentralized public decisionmaking and uses it to clarify the dramatic changes that have transformed the telecommunication industry from a heavily regulated monopoly to a set of market-oriented firms. He demonstrates how the decentralized decisionmaking process--whose apparent element of chaos has so often invited criticism--has actually made the United States a world leader in reforming telecommunication policy.

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Customer Reviews

A factually rich analysis of telecommunication policymaking, Brock’s book is the first insider’s look at how policymakers struggled to mesh together economic efficiency, politics, markets, and technology to reach their goals--which often conflicted. After reading this carefully researched work by an outstanding academic who actually wound up in the fray, you will wonder how it was all accomplished. (Mark S. Fowler, former Chairman, Federal Communications Commission)I am aware of no work that treats the history of telephone regulation in the United States with such care, at such length, or so evenhandedly. Further, the book is not merely history but economic history, in the sense that the economic incentives giving rise to the behavior described are carefully explored, as are the economic consequences of each policy development. (Bruce M. Owen Journal of Economic Literature)This is a clear, comprehensive, and brilliant analysis of the telecommunication policy process, since 1980, that has dealt with the transistion from monopoly to competition and is now reaching a climax in the pending Congressional legislation on the National Information

Infrastructure. (Henry Geller, former administrator, NTIA)America's choices of policy toward telecommunication triggered a revolutionary reorganization and gain in this sector's efficiency, first in the United States, but prospectively worldwide. Brock's book carefully traces the decentralized policymaking process that brought this revolution about. It advances the existing literature in many ways, notably in a clear and comprehensive analysis of the role of network externalities. (Richard E. Caves)

A factually rich analysis of telecommunication policymaking, Brock's book is the first insider's look at how policymakers struggled to mesh together economic efficiency, politics, markets, and technology to reach their goals--which often conflicted. After reading this carefully researched work by an outstanding academic who actually wound up in the fray, you will wonder how it was all accomplished. --Mark S. Fowler, former Chairman, Federal Communications Commission --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

great for the class I took

First, note that the rapid change of telecommunications technology and regulations makes it virtually impossible to keep a book fully up-to-date. Brock's book brings us up to 1994, and there have been significant changes since then. This immediately noticeable shortcoming is true with every book in this field, so we will not address it further.Brock paints a very readable and generally clear idea of telecommunications regulation, starting with a few chapters on theory. The philosophical underpinnings of regulation are of some interest, but we know that regulators do not study philosophy before making decisions. The concept that the U.S. system is set up so that there are many "regulators" often acting at cross purposes is an amazing one, given the incredible success of telecommunications in the U.S. The idea that such a successful system could appear so chaotic is worth noting, and Brock is the first author I have seen that praises the current system.Brock's presentation of history to about 1980 is just wonderful. You will gain a real feeling for why the U.S. system operates the way it does.Information after 1980 is not presented as clearly. In part, I think this is because Brock personally remembers what happened then, and has difficulty editing out the less significant events of that period.Overall, the reader is advised to develop a timeline of events to reduce confusion. Brock should include one, but does not.Brock also addresses in a very limited fashion how things should work with data traffic greater than voice traffic. It was easier to get away with that in 1994 when data traffic was still much less than voice traffic, but impossible to avoid

seven years later in 2001.With all that said, there is no book that presents this information more clearly. It just needs some editing of events from 1980 to 1994, an update into the 21st century, a timeline, and more consideration of regulations for data traffic.

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