

## Scope and Research Note

This paper postulates economic and political effects of widespread Internet availability at the local level in selected countries and regions of the developing world. It addresses the changes in local economic and political activity that are likely or at least possible once large numbers of people obtain Internet access.

Several topics lie *outside* the scope of this paper—

- How soon widespread Internet access is likely to be attained in each area. Its widespread availability is taken as a “given” condition. Timelines clearly will vary greatly from region to region.
- Current and near-term Internet developments in the countries and regions under study, except as they appear to point the way to long-term effects.
- The nature and evolution of Internet technology, except in special cases where it may have a unique impact on the developing world.
- The effects of widespread Internet access in the *developed* countries, except where they may be suggestive of future phenomena in the developing world.

It is, of course, difficult to research the future. The study team found virtually no published material that directly addressed the topics within the paper’s scope. Our research plan included the following steps—

- Find information on how local-level economic and political activity takes place today in the countries under study, in the absence of widespread Internet access. This data formed the baseline on which future Internet availability was conceptually overlaid, permitting potential changes to be identified. Information of this type, on *local* economic and political patterns, was surprisingly difficult to find.
- Find information on current and near-term Internet development in the developing world. We focused on the countries and regions under study, but also looked at other areas for development patterns that might be applicable.
- Identify and interview an expert on each of the five geographic areas under study, asking particularly for their expectations once widespread Internet access was attained. Interviewees were identified not only for their geographic area

expertise, but also for their record of publishing future-oriented, technology-oriented analysis.

- The subject matter experts interviewed were—
  - **Sub-Saharan Africa:** Dr. Robert Houdek, National Intelligence Officer for Africa. Dr. Houdek served much of his diplomatic career in African countries and has focused special attention on the technological outlook for the continent.
  - **China:** Dr. Daniel Rosen, National Economic Council, Executive Office of the President. Until May 2000, Dr. Rosen was a Research Fellow at the Institute for International Economics in Washington, DC. He specializes in Chinese economic development and telecommunications issues.
  - **India:** Ms. Carol Charles, Assistant Director, Global Information Infrastructure Commission and staff scholar at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. Ms. Charles, a native of India, has focused much of her research on that country.
  - **Russia:** Dr. William K. McHenry, Associate Professor, McDonough School of Business, Georgetown University, Washington, DC. Dr. McHenry teaches information systems and electronic commerce, has made more than 20 research trips to Russia, and has published on the outlook for information technology in Russia.
  - **Latin America:** Dr. Mark Falcoff, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC. Dr. Falcoff specializes in current analysis and future projections on Latin American economics and politics.

Subsequent to the research phase, a substantial part of the work for the paper consisted of a disciplined projective analytical process, focused on identifying proximate and second-order effects on local economics and politics of widespread Internet access in the countries under study.

The literary style of this paper is somewhat unusual, consisting almost entirely of “bullet” paragraphs, grouped under topical headings. The scope of the paper is broad, covering a wide range of long-term economic and political developments in five major geographic areas. The bullet format was used to highlight and encapsulate a wide variety of topics as efficiently and clearly as possible. Weaving a narrative around these major points would probably have obscured them to some degree and would have made for a much longer paper.