

From the Editors

Each day brings new examples of how information and communication technology (ICT) is reshaping the lives of people around the world. To one degree or another, the digital revolution has arrived in just about every corner of the globe. In recognition of this, representatives of the world's nations will gather in Geneva this December for the World Summit on the Information Society to discuss how access to ICT might be achieved for all people.

On the Internet and the World Wide Web, people are governing, learning, communicating, debating, “politicking”, shopping, and experimenting—conducting all kinds of interactions in ways only made possible by ICT. The Internet has brought into being a virtual world that, like the universe itself, is expanding every moment, full of promise, hope, and not a little mystery. But challenges remain if it is to achieve its full promise. The United States, in partnership with other governments, international organizations, and citizens of many countries, is committed to assisting people around the globe to meet these challenges so that this virtual world becomes a helpful and productive part of their everyday lives.

Among the articles in this edition of Global Issues, senior U.S. government officials outline priorities for Internet development and discuss U.S. assistance programs to help develop ICT skills, training, and access in developing countries. A U.S. lawmaker describes how the Internet can help create a more open and transparent society, and a scholar reviews efforts to bring the Internet into elementary and secondary schools. Finally, private sector experts explore the problems and challenges of protecting computers and the information they contain.

We hope that by considering the variety of issues and concerns presented in this journal, readers will gain a greater understanding of and appreciation for the digital revolution and their potential role in it.