

Series Editor's Introduction

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Becoming aware of a new subject that needs research is an intellectual challenge in its own right. Making it legible to others and developing a research agenda are even more so. Building out a field, for those subjects of research so broad, complex, and important that they deserve or require it, is a yet greater challenge by orders of magnitude.

Brian Kahin gets credit for the first round of making the subject of Internet governance research legible and stimulating the development of research agendas. As Founding Director of the Harvard Information Infrastructure Project (1989–1997), he organized a series of influential conferences that produced, in turn, a series of edited or coedited books, including several with MIT Press: *Public Access to the Internet* (1995), *Standards Policy for Information Infrastructure* (1995), *Borders in Cyberspace* (1997), *Coordinating the Internet* (1997), and more. It was in Kahin's conferences that Michael Goldhaber first introduced the concept of the attention economy, Jeffrey MacKie-Mason (now, as University Librarian at the University of California-Berkeley, famously providing leadership in the area of open access and the economics of scholarly publishing in the digital environment) discussed “unbundling” journal articles for separate sale of the elements, access to the Internet received the scholarly attention it deserved, the importance of standards and protocols came to be appreciated by a much wider group of thinkers than the very small group of cognoscenti historically involved, and many of us working on what we might otherwise have perceived as disparate research topics came to see the relationships among them all.

Laura DeNardis gets credit for the second round, currently underway, that has completed the task of establishing the field. Her own books are foundational, always required reading, including those published by MIT Press: *Protocol Politics* and the edited *Opening Standards*. Going further, though,

in leadership positions that began with service as Director of the Yale Law School Information Society Project and went on to include being Director of Research for the Global Commission on Internet Governance as well as formal and informal advisor to a number of nonprofit and governmental organizations—positions that have offered opportunities to fund and otherwise support and inspire research—DeNardis has systematically built out the field. This is the second book produced by the editorial team she has recently pulled together to expand on the effort of conceptualizing the domain, a team that includes Francesca Musiani of the CNRS in France and DeNardis's American University colleagues Nanette Levinson and Derrick Cogburn. The group's first book addressed the Internet as infrastructure.

My own thoughts regarding where the field of Internet governance is going can be found in my chapter in this book. Here, the point is other: what it takes to make an all-important subject of research visible, help scholars develop their research agendas, and build a field. This collection stands on its own, with great value for students and scholars. It also marks the “coming of age” of the field. The work does not claim to be comprehensive but, rather, to provide a sense of the range of the field, diverse ways of thinking about it, and examples of quite disparate types of research methods that can be used to study it.

Coeditor Levinson's concluding chapter contextualizes the whole within the history of the sociology of knowledge, providing insight into the processes of learning about Internet governance in a manner that should be inspirational for those considering joining this scholarly community as well as those who rely upon it in their own scholarship, research, and policy-making. The chapters by DeNardis and Mueller and Badiei, as well as my own, contextualize the field relative to its own history and other bodies of knowledge.

We see how the field looks from the perspective of the law (Weber), science and technology studies (coeditor Musiani), and information security (Deibert). There are exemplars of methods that range from text mining (coeditor Cogburn) and various types of technical analysis (Jardine; Deibert; and Hall, Madaan, and O'Hara) to discourse analysis (ten Oever, Milan, and Beraldo; as well as Hofmann) and interviews (Jørgensen).

The collaborative and multinational nature of the editorial team, as well as the book's authors and content, are indicators of the field's evolution. We are far from done thinking about how to think about Internet governance research, but this is a very strong place to begin.

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Methods, Frameworks, Futures

Edited by: Laura DeNardis, Derrick Cogburn,
Nanette S. Levinson, Francesca Musiani

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