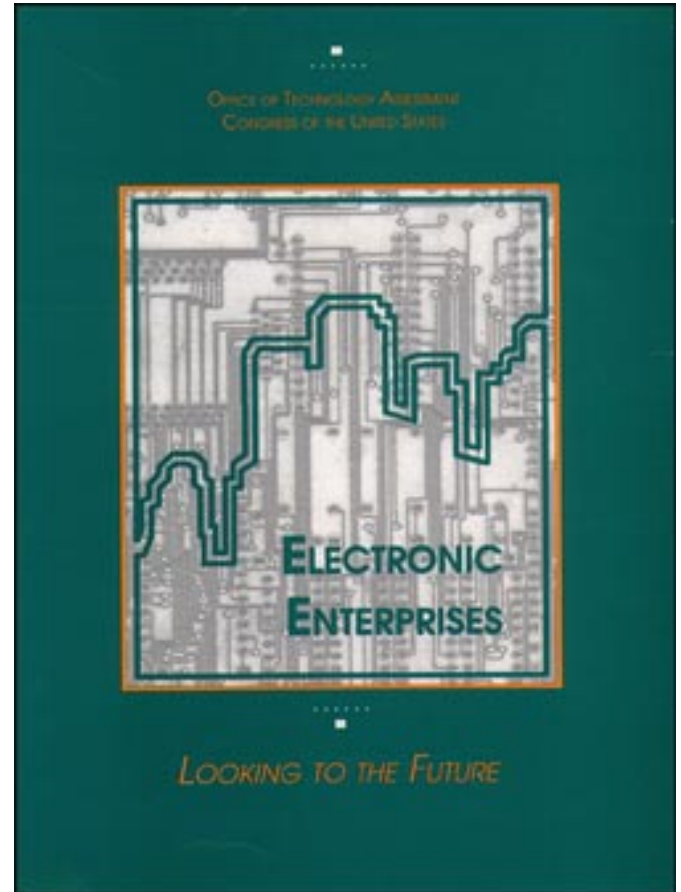


Electronic Enterprises: Looking to the Future

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Foreword

Electronic Enterprises: Looking to the Future takes a strategic look at the development of electronic commerce and identifies the characteristics of the infrastructure that will be required to support it. The report found that, in an electronically networked economy, the design and underlying architecture of the global information infrastructure will have a major impact on national economic growth and development. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology requested the report.

To support U.S. business performance and to ensure a competitive economic playing field, the information infrastructure will need to be flexible and open, seamless and interoperable, and evenly and ubiquitously deployed. How well the infrastructure meets these criteria will depend on factors such as the degree of competitiveness in the communication and information networking industries; the rules governing access and interconnection; and the availability of standards and software applications to support electronic commerce.

The government can adopt a number of strategies to promote a network architecture that meets these requirements. Several strategies are discussed in the report. Complementary actions to support business and the workforce in the effective use of networking technologies are also identified. If American businesses are to benefit fully from electronic commerce, infrastructure policy cannot be developed in a vacuum; adequate attention must also be given to the social and economic factors that govern the use of networking technologies as Congress develops a national infrastructure policy.

OTA appreciates the assistance of the project advisory panelists, workshop participants, and the interested business, labor, consumer, and other private sector groups and individuals who participated in the study. OTA values their perspectives and comments; the report is, however, solely the responsibility of OTA.



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/k)&: OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The panel does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

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