

Could broadband be the benchmark for globalization's progress and adoption?

[Economics](#), [Globalization](#)



Though there have been considerable advances in the field of internet technology, not all problems are addressed to reach globalization's progress and adoption. This is in contrast to the steady and rapid advances in semiconductor technology, information storage, networking, and applications, the interaction of IT with various elements of society is more complex. Although IT performance in many cases improves exponentially, the utility to users in many cases improves more slowly (Chandra et al. 2000).

For example, a doubling of computer processing speeds may bring only small improvements in the most widely used applications, such as word processing or spreadsheets. Furthermore, although it is common to talk about the "impact" or "effect" of IT or the Internet—implying a one-way influence—the interaction of IT with society is multidirectional and multidimensional. Over the past two decades, many studies have explored how organizations use IT. Cumulatively, these studies have found that a simple model of IT leading to social and organizational effects does not hold (Kling 2000).

Instead, IT is developed and used in a social context in which organizations and individuals shape the technology and the way it is used. The implementation of IT is an ongoing social process that involves changes in people's roles and in organizational procedures. Incentives and trust are important factors in the success of IT implementation. And broadband proliferation is an important ingredient of globalization. The public debate in this country on the War in Iraq has been the most hotly contested issue in recent history and shows no sign of letting up.

Through all the policy proposals, failures and triumphs many positive viewpoints have emerged about how to address the most distressing issues related to United State's new found global role: exporter of security. Dr. Barnett believes this is positive trend overall: " That is why the public debate about this war has been so important: It forces Americans to come to terms with whatI believeis the new security paradigm that shapes this age, namely, Disconnectedness defines danger. " I think that last statement is an apt template for understanding the daunting task facing the broadband era: the age of transactional transformation.

It is in the disconnectedness that defines the danger for our productiveness and growth, and hence our economy as a whole. The disconnectedness from novel approaches, the disconnectedness from relevant value models, disconnectedness from persistent progression to universal broadband access. Perhaps there is a need to view broadband technology adoption as a historical process in the same vain as globalization. Unfortunately, for many, this leads to a nasty polemic on it's relative merits.

Barnett has this to say on this issue: The problem with most discussion of globalization is that too many experts treat it as a binary outcome: Either it is great and sweeping the planet, or it is horrid and failing humanity everywhere. Neither view really works, because globalization as a historical process is simply too big and too complex for such summary judgments. Instead, this new world must be defined by where globalization has truly taken root and where it has not. Barnett goes on to say: Show me where globalization is thick with network connectivity, financial transactions, liberal

media flows, and collective security, and I will show you regions featuring stable governments, rising standards of living, and more deaths by suicide than murder.

These parts of the world I call the Functioning Core, or Core. But show me where globalization is thinning or just plain absent, and I will show you regions plagued by politically repressive regimes, widespread poverty and disease, routine mass murder, and most important the chronic conflicts that incubate the next generation of global terrorists. These parts of the world I call the Non-Integrating Gap, or Gap. Could broadband be the benchmark for globalization's progress and adoption? It can be, I believe the more the connectedness to the Functioning Core the greater the value rendered.

Broadband access providers whether wireline or wireless will have to holistically reconsider the ramifications of globalization in this context. They can do much to advance it positively or hinder it destructively. The lessons for content providers may seem less obvious but in a globalized economy the more connectedness the richer the value doesn't always resolve neatly. Microsoft, Google, Cisco, Apple, Oracle, Yahoo, eBay and IBM to name a few, have all handled this transition quite nicely. And if supporting and expanding the core is what the new economy is all about then I can think of no better marker for globalization than broadband.