

"Lessons from National Foresight Studies : What can Foresight tell us about IST priorities?"

Presentation at FISTERA Final Conference,
Seville, 16 – 17 June 2005
Michael Rader
Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe
Institut für Technikfolgen-Abschätzung und Systemanalyse (ITAS)
<http://www.itas.fzk.de>



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About WP1 of FISTERA

- Task is to construct an IST sector specific analysis for an enlarged Europe (EU 25+)
- Based on existing foresight reports from EU and beyond (US, Asia-Pacific region)
- 16 cases, plus information on several more national FS, in 2 phases (I: At, Cz, De, Es, F, Hu, Se, UK; II: Ca, El, Il, Jp, Kr, SE (2), US (Rand, NBIC)), uniform structure for case studies.
- Objective to assess position of Europe and recognise changes.



Foresight on IST – specific problems

- **“Zeitgeist”**: being trapped in the “Spirit of the Times” to assume that tomorrow’s issues will be the same as today’s.
- **“Hype”**: exaggerated marketing by stakeholders to “push” technology, reinforced by “hope”.
- **Dynamic development**: more difficult to anticipate IST development than other technologies (time horizon for IST in foresight sometimes shortened!!) Pervasive technology with applications in many fields (tendency to become invisible). Paradox (Jp. Foresight): importance giving lower ranking than in the past. Also globalisation!



What to expect from Foresight

- Participatory elements as safeguard against “hype”, but “Zeitgeist” remains a problem. At worst concern with issues which turn out not to be important
- Brings together actors from different spheres for development of common “visions” – creates networks
- Time horizon remains problem – deliberate inclusion of “wild cards”, thinking outside the box (SciFi etc.) as countermeasure to “Zeitgeist”.
- Results from participatory foresight seldom surprising. But are bold visions like US Mars Mission needed to drive innovation?



IST – Recent Trends From Foresight

- **Convergence no longer refers to merger of ICTs, but to nano, bio, info, cogno.** Still much “hype and hope” – need to clarify concepts, possible topic for participatory foresight.
- **E-Commerce still topic, but significance downplayed.** There are many issues needing resolution, e.g. privacy, security. Even at the height of the “internet” bubble, broad stakeholder participation led to realistic assessment.
- **Security has emerged as separate topic for foresight.** In the past, security was scattered across foresight, e.g. security of IT, use of ISTs for security applications etc.
- **Networks (e.g. broadband, wireless) are important topic.** But once they are in place, concepts for applications are still needed.
- **There will be competition for skilled staff needed for innovation.** For various reasons, this is a common theme in almost all foresight.



IST – Recent Trends From Foresight (2)

- **Application areas most mentioned for IST in foresight are those high on political agenda (lifelong learning, ageing, health, transport, government).** Doubts concerning affordability (e.g. ageing, health) and suitability (Government as “pioneer” user).
- **No uniform assessment of Europe.** Europe faces challenges such as ageing and the need for greater cohesion. Europe will need to compete for skilled staff. Assessments of innovative potential vary from “left behind” to good. Europe sometimes identified as potential partner (Canada, Korea) or competitor (US, Korea). Stronger orientation of member states towards European level (however more regional than EU as whole). Europe has strengths which can be turned to advantage (diversity, environment and environmental technology)



Thank you for your attention!

