The Digital Economy
Business Organization, Production Processes and Regional Developments

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This book provides an up-to-date account of the technologies, organizations, and dynamics which constitute the digital economy, and assesses the impacts they have on regions and communities.

The Digital Economy analyses the convergence of computers, advanced telecommunications, and the Internet which has made firms and workers increasingly sophisticated consumers of space. Advanced information technology (IT) has made the production and consumption of goods and services less dependent on locational constraints but not yet completely footloose.

Case studies of companies, including Amazon, Dell, Li & Fung, and Volvo, demonstrate that the geography of digitally-driven production is the outcome of both dispersion and agglomeration dynamics. Actually, global corporations have footprints that ignore – to some degree – distance and time. But creative and coordinating activities remain anchored in urban innovative ecosystems such as Silicon Valley and Bangalore.

Business has become network-centric, and flexible. Through global networks of modular production, offshoring practices, and telework implementation, companies seek to make the most of resources and talent wherever they are located.

These trends have been made possible by the development of a worldwide and integrated telecommunications network, whose unequal presence dictates the capabilities of places and communities to be connected to the global economy. However, the threat of the digital divide must not be overstated. In cities, rural areas, and emerging countries, local development is wrapped up in human capital, rather than technology.

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