The Internet Generation: Digital Divides and Choices Shaping Diffusion and Use

William H. Dutton
Oxford Internet Institute
University of Oxford

2:00-3:30 pm on Friday, April 21, 2006
Indiana University Bloomington, Herman B. Wells Library, Room LI001

Co-sponsored with the Telecommunications Department

Talk preceded by an informal gathering with cookies, tea, and coffee, available at 1:45pm.
A reception for the speaker and graduate students will follow the talk.
Dr. Dutton will then meet with interested doctoral students as a group at 3:45pm.

ABSTRACT

Research on digital divides in Britain demonstrates the limits of explanations focused on notions of social exclusion based on either socioeconomic status or geographical barriers to access. It is necessary to also incorporate the concept of ‘digital choice’ – the degree to which individuals choose not to use the Internet even when access is readily available. Choices can be driven by habit and attitudes linked to age cohorts and gender differences that can be addressed by initiatives quite different from those targeted on social exclusion. This talk will focus on the role of age in shaping digital divides in the adoption of the Internet and in patterns of use. The findings are based on the 2003 and 2005 Oxford Internet Surveys (OxIS), supplemented by data drawn from the World Internet Project, which places the findings from Britain in a larger, cross-national comparative perspective. See: http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/research/?rq=oxis/index and http://www.worldinternetproject.net.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Bill Dutton is Director of the Oxford Internet Institute, Professor of Internet Studies, University of Oxford, and Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. He was previously a Professor in the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California, which he joined in 1980, where he was elected President of the Faculty. During 1986-1987, he was a Fulbright Scholar in the United Kingdom, returning as national director of the UK ’s Programme on Information and Communication Technologies (PICT) from 1993 to 1996. Among his recent publications on the social aspects of information and communication technologies are Society on the Line (Oxford University Press, 1999); Digital Academe, edited with Brian Loader (Taylor & Francis Routledge, 2003); Social Transformation in the Information Society (Paris: UNESCO for the WSIS Series, 2004), which is available free online; and Transforming Enterprise, edited by
Dutton, Brian Kahin, Ramon O’Callaghan and Andrew W. Wyckoff (MIT Press, 2005). For more information, see Dr. Dutton’s web site at http://people.oii.ox.ac.uk/dutton/.