

DIGITALISATION AND COMMUNICATION: SOCIETAL TRENDS AND THE CHANGE IN ORGANISATIONS— PREFACE

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The digitalisation of communication started as early as the 1980s. With the rise of the internet in the mid-90s the digitalisation process intensified; then it took on another dimension with the spread of social media and smartphones in the mid noughties. These new technologies are providing new possibilities that are unveiling, or rather, strengthening societal trends. What's more, traditional forms of organisation are also being transformed at breakneck speed. This publication provides an overview of both developments: On the one hand we have societal developments such as the blurring of boundaries between real and digital worlds, constant connectivity, fake news, and social media outrage. On the other, we have the effects on traditional media, the workplace, schools, non-governmental organisations and sports.

Inspiration for this publication came from the Mercator Science-Policy Fellowship-Programme. This programme facilitates exchanges between its Fellows, who are executives “from the field”, and academic staff and researchers at the universities of Darmstadt, Frankfurt and Mainz. Mercator Fellows have shown a strong interest in the topics of communications, media and digitalisation, and their impact on policy, society and economy. This publication aims to provide an overview of this dynamic subject area. The different contributions offer perspectives from a variety of academic disciplines. Mercator Fellows have also contributed articles which throw light on how digitalisation is changing their organisations.

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