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The Transformative Capacity of New Technologies: A Theory of Sociotechnical Change (Routledge Advances in Sociology)

Ulrich Dolata

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Scientific concepts on the co-evolution of technology and society, as well as recent sociotechnical system approaches, focus on the general interrelations between technology, socioeconomic structures, and institutions. Their aim is to study and explain processes and modes of technological change. Rarely, however, have answers been put forward on the related question of processes of socioeconomic and institutional change, provoked by emerging new technological opportunities and constraints.

The Transformative Capacity of New Technologies redresses this imbalance, exploring the questions:

- how and to what extent do socioeconomic structures, institutions, and actors change under the influence of new technologies?
- how do they react to technology-induced pressures to change?
- what patterns do they adopt?

The book provides theoretical considerations as well as practical tools for analyzing and classifying exceptional periods of substantial sociotechnical change. It examines the literature on path-dependency and path-creation, on organizational and institutional change, and on sociotechnical transitions. Case studies on subjects such as the pharmaceutical industry, the music industry, the energy sector, and scientific publishing support the theoretical analysis. The book will be of interest to students and scholars of sociology, science and technology studies, work and industry studies, and management of technology and innovation.

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