

## Introduction

The communications revolution has cut across all aspects of society and politics in the late 20th century. Driving this revolution have been a number of technological advances, centring mostly on digital technology and fibre optics, which have vastly enhanced the capacity to store, process and transmit information. This revolution has created, among other things, a planetary web of instantaneous communications which has profoundly altered the international environment across a number of spheres, including the practice of diplomacy, the nature of state governance, and the conduct and scope of transnational business and finance. Taken together, these changes may very well constitute a fundamental transformation of the modern system of states itself.

This symposium gathered together experts from academia, business, the media and government to assess the implications of these new information technologies for the changing international environment and the management of interstate relations. They focused on how information technologies facilitated the rise of new social movements and networks across political boundaries, and how these, in turn, present challenges to the conduct of state governance, the practice of diplomacy, and the character of international economic and security relations. The symposium was designed to stimulate extensive discussion and interaction among the participants following each presentation, over lunch and during the final session. These discussions as well as the presentations themselves are reflected in the following summary. Full texts or speaking notes for the presentations where available are included.