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**Dissertation Title**

Political Foundations of Information Infrastructure Policy in the European Union:  
Prospects for Public Space and Citizenship in the Information Age

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**Abstract**

This study of the political significance of the information society in the European Union (EU), demonstrates that the information society for citizens essentially constitutes a systematic dismantling not only of the European public service paradigm of democratic development, but of the very future of political rights in the information age. The political reality of this historical change is assessed in the context of four specific areas of information society policies and laws: (1) telecommunications infrastructure liberalization; (2) intellectual property rights; (3) audiovisual policy; and (4) the constitutional foundation of communication rights.

The policy design of the information age is assessed through the following rival conceptions of European public space: (1) the competitive order of information liberalization as a global social movement derived from liberal political foundations; (2) universal service and public service in the European democratic tradition as developed from non-liberal political foundations; (3) nationalism or culturalism in Europe rooted in expressivist political foundations; and (4) the effect on political rights of participation demonstrated in tensions between public constitutional law derived from the Roman-Germanic legal tradition, and private, contractual law derived from the Anglo-American common law legal tradition.

The dissertation illustrates two principal arguments regarding the design of the multimedia age: First, as a theoretical and empirical demonstration of Hegel's (1952) concept of the central role law plays in the social order, the study attempts to develop Hegel's political thought into a theory of law founded on a deliberative paradigm. This approach provides a way of examining the legitimacy of modern policy and law for the information society through the requirements of democratic will-formation and of the principles of public reason and political rights of communication. Second, the dissertation argues that contrary to enhanced freedom of consumer choice the information society is supposed to bring about, the study's findings make it evident the multimedia digital age is far from being designed to function as a demand-led environment. Rather, it is held that the granting of absolute liberty for unlimited economies of scale under information liberalization seriously contradicts the terms and arguments of liberalization's own political profession, viz., that it was supposed to deliver a competitive commercial structure rather than a monopolistic one.