and stifled by certainty. Odd, then, that uncertainty is so commonly seen as a disadvantage of R&D.

Forbidden Fruit is Augsdorfer's Ph.D. thesis and turning a thesis into a book is never easy. More effort could have gone into converting what satisfies examiners into what appeals to readers. The latter do not find hypotheses presented solely to be proved or disproved particularly attractive, they are not assisted by citations and even whole topics that are obligatory rather than relevant, and they are intolerant of vast appendices of such matters as the precise dates of interviews. Particularly tedious for readers is the retention throughout the text of the company coding which assured examiners that each piece of information actually came from a real and specific company. A separate but related complaint arises from the sometimes odd English and the occasional careless mistake in presentation. These are forgivable in a thesis, when the candidate must do everything himself, but not in a book. Yet, in the light of the interest and importance of the topic, these are quibbles. They may even bestow some benefit in reminding readers that not all doctoral theses are safe and dull. There are still students, perhaps particularly in the Science Policy Research Unit at the University of Sussex, where Augsdorfer undertook this work under the supervision of Keith Pavitt, who seize the opportunity to do real research. At many other institutions such activity would be considered bootlegging.

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Convergence: Integrating Media, Information and Communication

Thomas F. Baldwin, D. Stevens McVoy and Charles Steinfield (Eds)

Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi, Sage, 1996, xviii + 430 pp., £40.00 (hbk), £17.99 (pbk), ISBN 0 8039 5904 4 (hbk) and ISBN 0 8039 5905 2 (pbk)

The authors argue that the telephone, cable, broadcast and computer industries, relatively independent in the past, are now converging to create a broadband communication system which will integrate voice, video and data with storage of huge libraries of material available on demand, with the option of integration as appropriate. The telephone, cable and computer industries provide the technology for this integration, and the television and information industries provide the substance. They give an extremely thorough introduction to all the relevant technological, managerial, political and economic issues involved. Beginning with chapters on existing technologies and the situation in telephone, information services, and television, they proceed to survey emerging technologies and the services they will make possible, and then discuss, in consecutive chapters, management issues, the market, advertising and shopping, competition, communication policy, and multinational full service networks (this last contributed by Joseph Straubhaar and Joonho Do). There is a thoughtful final chapter on the social and economic—and even, briefly, ecological—impacts of these developments.

Be reassured: this is not a book of breathless hype on the new world which is unfolding. There is no presumption that what is becoming technological possible will happen: the authors' feet are firmly on the ground of what can reasonably be expected to succeed commercially. Unfortunately, the feet and the ground are very much American: apart from the Straubhaar and Do chapter, there is hardly a word on the

world outside the United States, and non-US readers, including this reviewer, have to work out for themselves, if they can, how the roads which may be travelled elsewhere are affected by the different points from which one is starting. This is a pity, but nonetheless the US reality is, for better and often for worse, worth knowing about for everyone else. Further, the treatment is often quite general enough for the relevance to other countries to be clear. For example, in the final chapter there is some emphasis on the danger of inequality of access to information and entertainment, which clearly applies world-wide.

If anything, the authors seem a little pessimistic. They are rightly concerned about the social isolation which may arise when people interact mainly in cyberspace. But there is some evidence that cyber-interaction can work to stimulate the face-to-face variety in local communities, for example. Likewise, 'A part of the society will have access to news and encyclopedic information at great depth and diversity, on demand' (p. 392) ... and heaven help the rest. And what, pray, is new about such a gap? Compare the books and newspapers which are, and ever were, to be found in the homes of the different social classes. There will be much better opportunities for a determined government to do something about the new gap than there were with the old one. But the warning about the entertainment gap which is likely to develop is well taken: pay-per-view instead of television programmes broadcast free to all will mean that there may no longer be programmes which the whole population of a country can, and largely does, watch. Such cultural unifiers may well be important, and worth trying to hold on to, even if we have only had them for some fifty years. This is all the more true for such countries as the UK, for which these unifiers are—if Americans will excuse the contrast—generally of better quality than most of theirs. To end on a respectful note, the greatest benign unifiers of all—global unifiers—are the better Hollywood blockbusters. Never before in human history has there been any medium which has been capable of addressing major social and political issues in a way which can both enlighten and entertain a substantial fraction of the world's population in every continent. Spielberg, for one, has done that with *Empire of the Sun, Schindler's* List, and *Amistad.* Is that not truly a brave new world which we should strive to maintain and extend?

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Science, Technology and Society: An Introduction

Martin Bridgstock, David Burch, John Forge, John Laurent and Ian Lowe

Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1998, xii + 288 pp., AU$29.95, ISBN 0 521 58735 2

One of the most prominent characteristics of the field sometimes known as 'Science and Technology Studies' is the lack of a single textbook which could serve as an introduction to the area. Perhaps this should not be too surprising given the tendency of those working within the field to emphasise its interdisciplinary nature. For some, the lack of an introductory text may provide proof of the newness and specialness of 'STS'—a badge of honour that sets STS apart from the traditional, narrow disciplines from which most of its founders were refugees. Many others though would doubtless appreciate the production of a good, broad introduction to the potentially bewildering range of areas that make up STS, if only to make their own teaching lives easier.