Bargaining Norms Arguing Standards

Contents
Technical standards are a typical phenomenon of complex societies. They are a means to achieve control and to regulate or coordinate the production and uses of technology. Proportional to the increase of complexity, standards are a prerequisite for enabling the (international) interlinking of technical components and systems.

In this book, researchers and practitioners argue that standardisation should be understood as technological as well as social and political activity. To negotiate norms and standards proves to be a technological as well as political tour de force.

Key questions that will be addressed in this book are: How do technical standards emerge? What is the role of negotiations in these processes? Who are the negotiators? Which problems do they face? What is the role of national and international (political) styles, informal networks, reputation and prestige? Finally, what does this mean for research and policy on standardisation?

This work combines two ambitions. In the first place, it feeds into a growing academic interest in standardisation processes. The book brings together perspectives from the history and sociology of technology, economics, business studies and political science. Their views on standardisation processes will be confronted with the views of experts who were actively involved in such processes. In the second place, it helps to prepare the way for outlooks into transnational infrastructure development, as part of a foresight exercise performed by STT.

STT
The STT Netherlands Study Centre for Technology Trends was established in 1968 by the Royal Institution of Engineers in the Netherlands (KIVI). In 2001, STT merged with the Future Shape of Technology Foundation Beweton. STT carries out foresight on topics, which cross the border between technology and society. Within the foresight process, STT stimulates participants to think innovatively about the future. The most important aim for STT in doing foresight exercises is to encourage the exchange of participants’ – each with their own specific academic background and working environment – ideas and experiences. This can also be referred to as ‘knowledge fusion’. The foresight working method arises from the conviction that people themselves are the ‘engine’ to new developments. In this way, STT develops visions for the future. A publication is the tangible result of a foresight exercise, however, the results are also dispersed via the media and lectures. In addition, STT roots these ideas and results into the practical environment. After foresight on a topic has been completed, the results should be transferred and continued into other activities. The participants, who take part in this foresight process are the most important ambassadors for the forth-setting and dissemination of ideas.

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This book is the outcome of a larger project on the future of infrastructure networks, entitled HubHolland.eu.

The project was organised in cooperation with the Consultative Committee of Sector Councils for research and development (COS) of which STT is a member. This particular workshop was organised with Maastricht University and Utrecht University.
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