

Regulation and Social Impact

SAGENTIA

In an era of rapidly changing technologies, driven mainly by a competitive marketplace, it is easy to forget that Government has a role too. Though Governments and regulators have generally been cautious about intervening lest they dampen incentives to innovate, most now accept a responsibility for ensuring that the benefits of innovation are shared fairly and do not lead to a lasting technological divide.



Recognising that not all can be left to the market alone, we are often asked to help central Government and national regulators to research and interpret the effects of technology and innovation, and to devise solutions.

National measurement systems and standards are crucial to trade and innovation. However, they would be vulnerable to underinvestment if left to the private sector alone. Government on the other hand is not expert in technologies, and is in a poor position to make prudent choices about where to invest. We have advised clients in the UK and other countries on the types of standards that are required, the economic impact of these standards and how they affect quality of life.

A similar scenario confronts telecoms regulators such as Ofcom, which strive to balance economic and social objectives, and seek help in researching and forecasting how new technologies will play out. For example, in one project for Ofcom, we considered the case for raising the

allowed power in radio-based broadband networks. While such a move had the potential to encourage the roll-out of broadband in rural areas, there were also risks of generating interference – which would have both economic and social costs.

At Sagentia we investigate complex issues of technology and its impact on everyday life. Before the decision was taken by the UK Government to switch from analogue to digital television, we researched the human aspects of the switchover. Our research included the effects of the switch on disabled and elderly people, and the response of the individual to the element of compulsion involved.

Technology has the potential either to liberate or to discriminate, and a growing area of our work now concerns inclusive design – making everyday products usable by as many people as reasonably possible. Here, we have worked with a number of prominent public sector institutions to encourage the adoption of inclusive design principles by the private sector.

For further information email:
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Sagentia

Many minds make bright work

We create value from technology by developing richer solutions with our clients that enable them to realise better business opportunities.

We operate in six market sectors developing new technologies, products and services that change the basis of competition. We assist business leaders and policy makers to create strategies for technology, innovation and growth.

Our *Collective Technology Wisdom*[®] – the unique characteristic of our company – guides how we work. We form highly creative teams that draw on individuality and collective experience. And we take a multi-dimensional approach to opportunity discovery and problem solving, drawing on our combined technical expertise, business acumen and industry experience.

We can work with you wherever you are in the world. Our teams are situated in state-of-the-art facilities in Europe, the USA and China.

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