

Haddon, L. (2004). *Information and communication technologies in everyday life: A concise introduction and research guide*. Oxford, England: Berg.

Reviewed by: [Richard J. Varey](#)

I received this book with some sense of curiosity. What could I learn from a concise introduction to ICTs in everyday life? I have not been disappointed, and have been ably provided with a highly readable entry point by a leading researcher in the field.

Leslie Haddon has assembled a rich guide resource for new media researchers, product developers, and their sponsors ? indeed anyone who wants to quickly identify, navigate among, and understand the body of research that explains why and how ICTs feature in our lives. Thus, a range of research themes in the field of ICT and society are reviewed within an emerging theoretical framework that emphasises social relationships. The author succeeds in doing the hard work of drawing together a considerable and diverse body of research literature and in presenting an engaging review centred on the general concept of domestication. The research covered in this ?mini encyclopaedia has a common interest in the social processes within which ICTs come into use (and disuse) in the home, and this review valuably moves beyond simple analysis of uses and benefits.

The ICTs mostly considered are the mobile phone and the Internet ? this mirrors the observable attentions of the students we now see in our classes. Drawing mostly on European studies, the author is a prominent British ?new media researcher associated with the London School of Economics, and so the text is authoritative, whilst accessible. He covers eight substantive themes in ten chapters, each with helpful end-notes that assist in engaging further with the literature.

This book provides a comprehensive and structured entry to a substantial published body of research findings and methods, and will be a valuable resource for researchers new to the field, and those others who want an overview of the ?state of the art. As a reference work on ICTs and society this will well serve researchers, students, and policy makers, for example, by providing more than 260 literature references to key studies and researchers.

Chapter 2 discusses adoption, access, and use, and considers what the presence and absence of ICTs means to people in their everyday lives.

Chapter 3 focuses on children and the domestic politics of their use of ICTs, as well as on parents attempts to control use and childrens resistance to such efforts.

The use of ICTs in managing social relationships with others is examined in Chapter 4, for example, in reviewing studies of Internet use and sociability.

In Chapter 5, the author looks at social networks from the perspectives of the diffusion of new technologies and services, social support, and community and civic engagement.

The impact of ICTs on our experience of time and their use in managing our time is the subject of Chapter 6.

Taking the popular ?new media theme of mobility, Chapter 7 explores our travel behaviour and behaviour in public spaces with ICTs, identifying patterns of ICT use and abuse.

The changes in life circumstances and how these interact with ICT use is examined in Chapter 8. The author investigates research on how our experience of ICT use changes over time through life transitions of youth, parenthood, family composition, retirement, and ageing.

The ?careers of ICTs are investigated in the penultimate chapter. A brief history of ICTs precedes consideration of how new emergent ICTs relate to older established ICTs, our awareness of ICTs in general, how they are fitted into the home situation, and our social discourses about ICTs in day-to-day conversation and in media portrayals of use, benefits, social impact, and so on.

The author concludes with reflections on the use of the domestication framework and how it can be extended in further research. He highlights some general lessons for product designers and students that can be acquired in reading this book, including how to use it in the evaluation of the social consequences of ICTs.

I wasnt disappointed in the book and found that the promise of the title and the allure of the attractive cover were fulfilled. At the outset, I wasnt sure what the book held for me as a scholar of mediated human communication.

Reading the book was satisfying and thought-provoking, and I would suggest that a reference copy be kept on the bookshelf of every serious student of interaction media and processes. It should be required reading for research students as they formulate their research plans.

The one small niggle for me is that someone in the production team thought that it would make a nice allusion back to the early days of ICTs (PCs, actually) to put the chapter titles in simulated dot matrix printer style. For me, the effect is cheap and spoils an otherwise neat book!

Purchase information: This book is available from all good booksellers, or can be purchased direct from Footprint Books at www.footprint.com.au.

About the reviewer:

Dr Richard J Varey is Professor of Marketing, Department of Marketing, The Waikato Management School, University of Waikato.

Formerly Reader in Communication & Management, and Director of the Centre for Communication & Knowledge in Management, a research group of the Information Systems Research Institute, at the University of Salford, Richard is a member of the editorial boards of the *Journal of Communication Management*, the *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *Corporate Reputation Review*, the *Journal of Management Development*, the *International Journal of Applied Marketing* and *PRism; Online journal of refereed public relations and communication research*. He is a member of the Advisory Committee and Visiting Professor of the Corporate Communication Institute at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Richard's research interests are participatory and ethical communication systems management, and management studies methodology. He was formerly Director of a faculty Doctoral Researcher Training Programme at Salford.

Richard received the British Institute of Management Young Manager of the Year Award in 1991, an IABC Research Foundation Best Paper Award in 1997, and the Outstanding Paper Award from the *European Journal of Marketing* in 1999.

He is a graduate of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (BSc 1980) and Manchester School of Management, UMIST (MSc 1990, PhD 1996), and a member of the Institute for Learning & Teaching.

Richard has co-edited (with Prof. Barbara Lewis) *Internal Marketing: Directions for Management* (Routledge, 2000), and authored *Marketing Communication: Principles and Practice* (Routledge, 2001) and *Relationship Marketing: Dialogue and Networks in the E-Commerce Era* (Wiley, 2002). His papers have been published widely, including the *European Journal of Marketing*, the *Journal of Marketing*, the *Journal of Information Technology*, the *Journal of Communication Management*, *THEXIS*, and the *International Journal of Service Industry Management*.