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Living with global uncertainty

SYMPACT: Sustainability Impacts of the Digital Transformation

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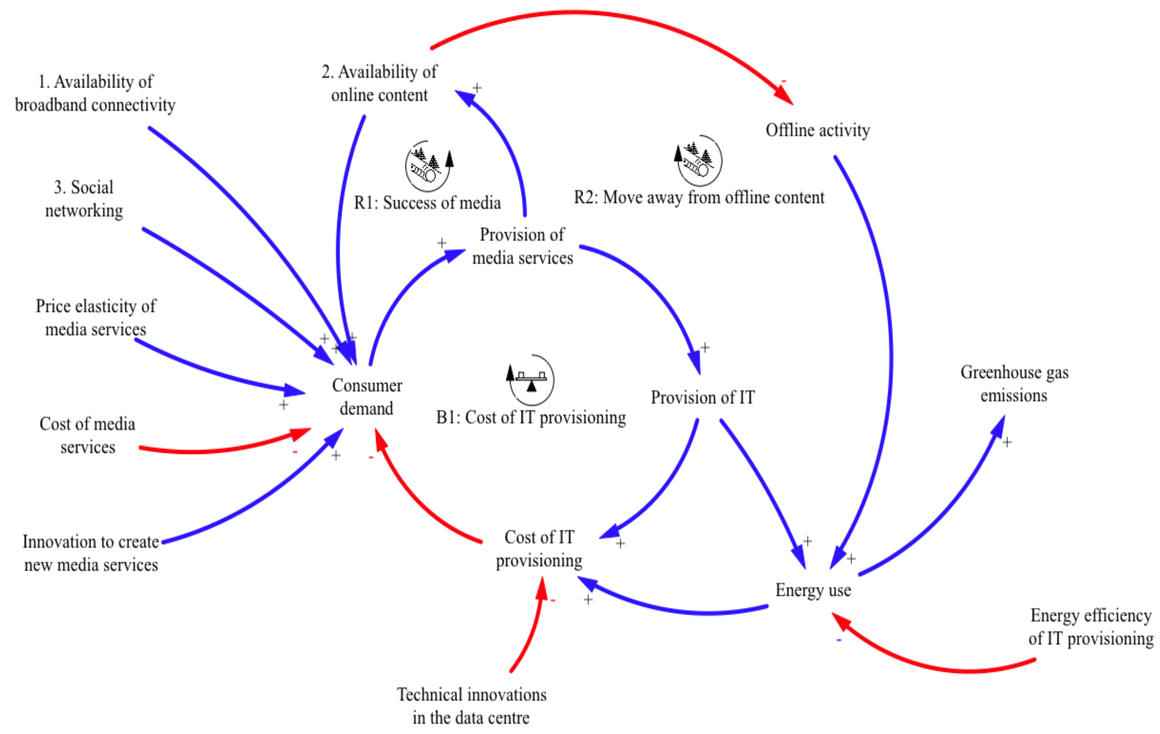
- Digital technology is transforming the news, media and publishing industries, through the movement of activity to the web accessed both through PC and 3G phone, specialised eReader devices such as the Kindle, and the flexibility that digital printing offers over traditional offset approaches.
- This transformation is coming at a time of increased concern over energy availability and greenhouse gas emissions. Will the transformation decrease or increase the energy requirements of the news and media industry? Can the industry embed an understanding of the future energy/climate implications in the strategic decisions it makes?
- The SYMPACT project aims to support this understanding by considering a number of questions; What is the environmental impact of both print and online media? How will changes in technology alter this impact over time? How is digital technology changing customer behaviour now, and how might this happen in the future? What new business models do technological advances open up, and how will they affect the environmental impact? How will environmental factors, such as carbon pricing, act as business and behavioural drivers within this system? Beyond energy and climate, what other sustainability implications might this transformation have?
- To tackle these questions the project will develop a new modelling framework which combine systems modelling, environmental life cycle analysis, scenario development and qualitative representation of uncertainty.
- The modelling framework will be embodied in a distributed web-based tool, which will allow large numbers of stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to play a role in building, critiquing and exploring models of the environmental impact of the digital transformation. This will be done in such a way to allow future application to other industries.
- This project is being carried out in conjunction with Guardian News and Media and the University of Surrey, and is funded through the EPSRC Transforming Energy Demand through Digital Innovation programme (EP/I000151/1).



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