The Dynamics of Standards

Edited by Tineke M. Egyedi, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands and Knut Blind, Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research, Karlsruhe and Berlin University of Technology, Germany, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, The Netherlands

‘The economics of standards has grown from being a rather arcane speciality into a major issue in industrial economics, strategy and technology policy. This collection of empirical papers is edited by two researchers that have made important contributions to that literature. Their particular focus is on what they call “standards dynamics”: what happens to standards after they have been developed. This is welcome, because that particular issue has been largely ignored in the literature so far.’

– Peter Swann, Nottingham University Business School, UK

‘Contributions to this volume by experienced economists, social scientists, engineers and computer scientists lay an interdisciplinary basis for understanding the cause and impact of standards dynamics. Intriguing questions and convincing responses reveal the practical and the scientific implications of change. An excellent collection of articles!’

– Raymund Werle, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies

‘This is an important new book that directly addresses probably the most significant and long-standing lacuna in our understanding of standards . . . In many respects, the contributors set out a new paradigm for the investigation of standards. They open the door to new kinds of questions about the function and role of standards in rapidly changing technological and business environments and new approaches to the investigation of standardisation phenomena. The scientific implications will be far reaching.’

– From the foreword by Richard Hawkins

This book addresses the new field of standards dynamics. It focuses in particular on the tension between standards and change. Standards are points of reference and should therefore be inherently stable (at least to a certain degree). However, technologies change at an increasing pace, particularly in the field of information technology (IT). This requires the development of more standards and more updates, and leads to increased competition between standards. In many situations problems arise, such as how to retain compatibility if standards keep on changing and whether to adopt the new version. If standards are related, how does changing one standard affect the others? The contributing authors gathered here analyse the causes and scale of change in order to demonstrate how to prevent, reduce and cope with its negative impact.

Addressing a number of highly up-to-date issues including the sustainability of documents and data, this book will be of great interest to those concerned with innovation, management of technology and the emerging field of standardisation studies. In addition, standard-setting organisations and policymakers should be aware of the ambivalence of standards dynamics.

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