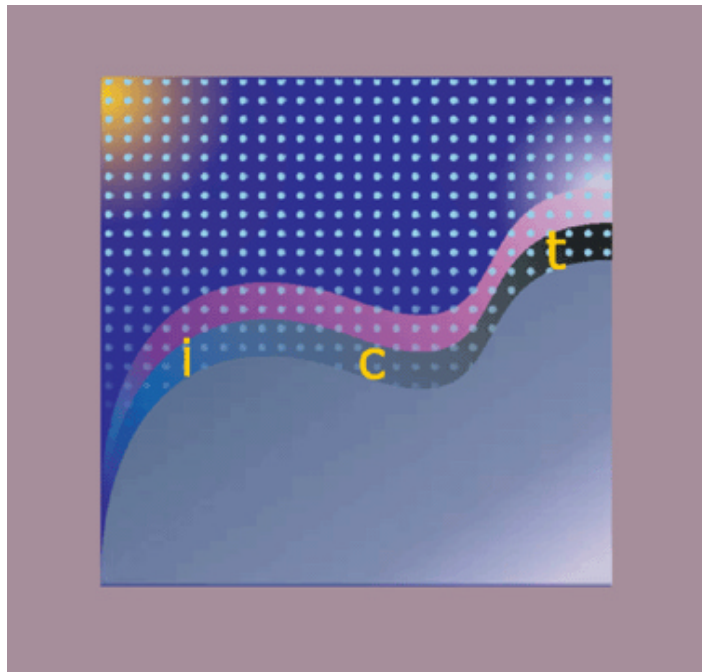


United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

# E-COMMERCE AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2002

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## Foreword

E-commerce is one of the most visible examples of the way in which information and communication technologies (ICT) can contribute to economic growth. It helps countries improve trade efficiency and facilitates the integration of developing countries into the global economy. It allows businesses and entrepreneurs to become more competitive. And it provides jobs, thereby creating wealth.

But knowing that an instrument is powerful is not enough to ensure that it will be put to the best possible use. We need to understand how it works, and how and when it should be used, and find creative ways to put this knowledge into practice, disseminate it widely and maximize its power. Towards that end, the *E-Commerce and Development Report 2002* provides factual information and analysis covering a range of topics that will influence the expansion of e-commerce in developing countries. The Report also identifies the policy and business options available to developing countries, and makes practical proposals for maximizing the contribution of e-commerce to economic and social development.

If the world is serious about achieving the Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty by the year 2015, ICT must figure prominently in the effort. Everyone – governments, civil society, private sector businesses – has a vital stake in fostering digital opportunity and putting ICT at the service of development. Yet despite commendable efforts and various initiatives, we are still very far from ensuring that the benefits of ICT are available to all. The digital divide is as wide as ever, with billions left unconnected. I hope this report contributes to the efforts of the international community to seize the extraordinary opportunities of the digital revolution.



Kofi A. Annan  
Secretary-General of the United Nations

## Acknowledgments

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