Foreword

I have been interested in the development and evolution of broadband for many years, and the one thing that has struck me in that time is the dynamic nature of the subject. Just when we think that we have it captured and perhaps have established a mental model for understanding it, at least in our own domain, broadband confounds us by reinventing itself and bringing up new issues and challenges in our own area and around the world.

This handbook is testimony to the diverse nature of the subject, covering a wide range of issues and experiences in many sectors, industries, governments, regulatory frameworks, and areas of the world.

The book is truly international and provides examples and experiences that will surprise and engage even the most knowledgeable. For example, its chapters range from the affects of broadband on the motion picture industry in the United States, and thus the world, through to actual and potential healthcare benefits in the developing world—from capitalist economics to social and community benefits, and back. As well as the experiences in a global context, the book also covers the critical role of governments and regulation and the economic development aspects of broadband.

There can be few technologies that have been more influential and that have more serious and potentially beneficial social implications than broadband, and it seems we are only at the beginning of these affects. This handbook provides an essential guide to that diversity and the issues to be addressed for successful broadband implementation.

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Guy Fitzgerald *is professor of information systems at Brunel University and is head of the Department of Information Systems and Computing. Prior to this he was the cable and wireless professor of business information systems at Birkbeck College, University of London, and before that he was at Templeton College, Oxford University. As well as being an academic, he has also worked in the computer industry with companies such as British Telecom, Mitsubishi, and CACI Inc., International. His research concerns the effective management and development of information systems and he has published widely in these areas. He is probably best known for his work in relation to development techniques and methodologies and is the author of a major text in this area entitled Information Systems Development: Methodologies, Techniques and Tools, now in its fourth edition. He is also well known for his research in the areas of strategy, outsourcing, and executive information systems. His most recent research is concerned with the development of flexible information systems to enhance organizational agility. He is founder and co-editor of the Information Systems Journal (ISJ), an international journal from Blackwell Publishing, and he has been a member of many international Program Committees, including the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) and the European Conference on Information Systems (ECIS).*