

THE RECURSIVE REGULATORY MODEL

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Abstract:

The role of communication technologies in affecting fundamental societal concerns, such as privacy, is a pressing issue within communications law and policy. The design of the technology can influence a variety of societal concerns including privacy, accessibility, freedom of speech, and intellectual property protection. This paper presents a model for understanding how technology affects or regulates our online experiences. The model is inspired by Giddens structuration theory with some insights from Actor-Network Theory. The Recursive Regulatory Model (RRM) theorizes how communication technology develops, evolves, and acts as a regulatory mechanism. Specifically, RRM focuses on the role of institutions in the development of technology, how technology affects individuals, how individuals reconfigure technology, and how individuals can influence the development of technology. The result is a framework for analyzing how technology affects society and how society can reshape technology to comport with societal goals.