Global Broadband Battles: Why the U.S. and Europe Lag While Asia Leads

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Description

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Review by Jeffrey Barlow <barlowj@pacificu.edu>

About

Global Broadband Battles: Why the U.S. and Europe Lag While Asia Leads.
Fransman, Martin

This volume, edited by the prize-winning Professor Martin Fransman, [1] is both timely and important. While it is best suited for an audience with a high level of interest, that interest could be in Broadband, in the international hi-tech environment, or in the legislative and economic environments of Japan, Korea, China, the United States, France, Germany, Italy or Sweden. Each of these nations is the subject of a complete chapter in the edited work.

The value of any edited work must lie largely in the quality of the individual contributors. These are, like the editor himself, a highly qualified group. The majority are both natives of the nation about which they write, and well-trained economists.

Fransman, however, provided a strong editorial hand, and contributed excellent summaries of each of the three groupings of chapters. In fact, it would be possible to take away considerable understanding and value from a reading of only Fransman’s general introduction and his summaries. These summaries each serve as a more detailed introduction to the book’s three sections: Part I, Asia: Japan, Korea, and China; Part II, North America: The United States; and Part III, Europe: France, Germany, Italy, and Sweden.

The work logically follows this particular organization because it is the thesis of the book that broadband development in Asia far outpaces that in either the United States or Europe. The larger question the work attempts to answer is why that is true.

A major value of the book is that it very much respects the influence of both history and culture in the nations concerned and treats each as a specific individual case. We learn, for example, that whereas it is true that Asia leads, the reasons why Korea and Japan are far in advance of the rest of the world may differ for each nation.

While each of the two has created a policy and economic environment which greatly facilitates the development of broadband, Korea has the advantage that more than half its population lives in apartment blocks, greatly simplifying the so-called “last mile” problem—how to get full fiber conduits to the end user.

Japan does not have this advantage, though it is also highly urbanized. But seeing the importance of broadband development, Japan chose to create a policy environment which encouraged disruptive newcomers to the industry even at the expense of the Japanese governmental corporation, National Telephone and Telegraph (NTT).

The United States is a particular analytical problem because the development of communications and of computer technology is, of course, amongst the highest in the world. But its ranking in terms of both quality of broadband—the U.S. defines “broadband” as including the slowest speeds of all the nations covered—and in terms of its distribution among the population as well, unfortunately, continue to slip steadily. At present, it is ranked as 24th internationally. [2]
So the question becomes, “Why does the United States, with such an early start and a highly developed hi-tech industry, provide slower speeds of access to a lower percentage of its population, and usually at higher prices, than twenty-three other nations?

The contributors to Global Broadband Battles, being largely cautious academic economists, do not attempt to answer this question with certainty. The editor views this work as necessary to establishing the understanding to eventually answer it.

However, the overall perspectives of the contributors are quite clear: The United States has chosen to permit an oligopoly of non-competitive firms to control the industry. Moreover, competition has declined rather than increased in the industry, due to federal policies.

In the absence of competition in America, disruptive technologies are restrained. The competitors tend to compete with each other over service and inconsequential factors, rather than to markedly increase speed or to develop new technologies or even to carry current technology to its logical end-point, full fiber to the home. In short, in America, competition is restrained largely to the allocation of advertising budgets.

However, to their credit, the contributors do not risk broad generalizations but rather continually point out that there are often no simple answers in this field. There are cases in which market regulation clearly facilitates the development of broadband, and others when competition is critical.

Recently, I had an opportunity to, in effect, field test the information in the work as I was an observer at the August 2007 Aspen Institute Forum on Communications and Society (FOCAS). [3] The group was composed of more than fifty luminaries from publishing, hi-tech and government—including two members of the FCC, and Viviane Reding, European commissioner for Information Society and Media. [4] Following three days of conversation and debate, the group identified improved broadband and much greater access to it as the central issue in U.S. telecommunications policy for the immediate future.

Broadband policy is, of course, a very complex and controversial issue. I found, however, that reading Global Broadband Battles more than prepared me to understand its history and its present context in the sometimes highly technical discussions at FOCUS. In fact, I felt that many of the participants could have benefited from reading the work as well, as they were ill prepared to understand some of these issues, particularly as they bore upon both the history of the issue in the United States and in non-American contexts.

Endnotes

[1] Fransman has won prizes both in the United Kingdom and in Japan for his books on hi-tech topics. See his personal page at: http://www.jets.man.ed.ac.uk/staff.htm . His works include: The Market and Beyond: Information Technology in Japan (Cambridge University Press) which won the Masayoshi Ohira Prize; Japan’s Computer and Communications Industry (Oxford University Press); Visions of Innovation (Oxford University Press); Telecoms in the Internet Age: From boom to bust to …? (Oxford University Press).


[4] http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/reding/index_en.htm Commissioner Reding was, in my estimation, the true star of this conference in that she was very nearly the sole voice at the conference with extensive knowledge of the conference topic outside the United States. While she was unfailingly polite and restrained, she more than once was visibly exasperated at our collective lack of knowledge. At one point she asked why Americans seemed incapable of learning from foreign experience and insisted on redeveloping everything regardless of other’s successes. A member of the audience answered simply, “Hubris.”

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online jobs

on January 31, 2014 at 1:01 AM said:

Hi! I just wish to offer you a huge thumbs up for the excellent info you've got right here on this post. I am coming back to your website for more soon.

Network Marketing Opportunities 2013

on January 31, 2014 at 1:52 AM said:

Thanks for sharing your thoughts on lump sum payment online trading accounts online business administration degrees outpatient alcohol treatment auto insurance liability car donation ct property development finance all three credit reports consolidate mortgage dental implants new jersey investment fraud lawyers drug rehab arizona serviced office space web hosting with asp cash back credit stock trading platforms business insurance lead how to do an intervention free debt management advice how much does lasik surgery cost forex trading program aircraft charter companies ecommerce hosting plan site web m to bsn degree accident attorneys florida how much car insurance chicago wrongful death lawyer reservationless cheverolet hhr low interest rate personal loan interest checking accounts hillarys blinds kameraA± chat divorce lawyer new york rv financing bad credit avatar der herr der elemente property management maintenance software allinternal
Simply want to say your article is as surprising. The clearness
in your post is simply excellent and i could assume you’re an expert
on this subject. Well with your permission let me to grab your feed to keep
up to date with forthcoming post. Thanks a million and please keep up the enjoyable
work.

building a sorted list
on January 31, 2014 at 6:23 AM said:

I am sure this piece of writing has touched all the internet
visitors, its really really pleasant post on building up new weblog.

mlm seminar tips
on January 31, 2014 at 6:24 AM said:

Appreciation to my father who stated to me regarding this webpage,
this website is in fact awesome.

Our site
on January 31, 2014 at 10:14 AM said:

Hey there! I’ve been reading your website for a while now and finally got the courage to go ahead and
give you a shout out from Porter Texas! Just wanted to tell
you keep up the fantastic work!

business partners
on January 31, 2014 at 1:06 PM said:

I always emailed this weblog post page to all my friends, for the reason
that if like to read it then my links will too.

barbie laura shopnbc miami beach hotels radio victoria’s secret real estate training new york lodging auto
insurances conference call nickleback chicago tribune so you think you can dance the d c scene hair hello
kitty graffiti minijuegos com skin care se
on January 31, 2014 at 1:23 PM said:

Hi, i read your blog occasionally and i own a similar one and
i was just curious if you get a lot of spam remarks? If so how do you protect against it, any plugin or
anything you can advise? I get so much lately it’s driving me crazy so any help is very much appreciated.
Dylan Kravitz
on January 31, 2014 at 5:10 PM said:

Oh my goodness! an incredible article dude. Thank you Nevertheless I’m experiencing problem with ur rss . Don’t know why Unable to subscribe to it.
Is there anyone getting equivalent rss drawback? Anyone who knows kindly respond. Thnx;

lasik surgery, eye surgery, laser surgery, lasik
on January 31, 2014 at 7:33 PM said:

Great write-up, I’m regular visitor of one’s web site, maintain up the excellent operate, and It’s going to be a regular visitor for a long time.

private webcam sex
on January 31, 2014 at 8:08 PM said:

Nice post. I’m reviewing continually this particular site and I’m influenced! Useful facts especially the closing part 😄 I deal with such information significantly. I was in search of the following particular information and facts for just a number of years. Thank you and with fortune.

Emily
on January 31, 2014 at 9:02 PM said:

Hello Dear, are you genuinely visiting this web page on a regular basis, if so afterward you will absolutely obtain good experience.

Michale
on February 1, 2014 at 6:32 AM said:

Do you have any video of that? I’d love to find out more details.

app youtube
on February 1, 2014 at 9:57 AM said:

WOW just what I was looking for. Came here by searching for approval boise hotel
Ngan
on February 1, 2014 at 10:26 AM said:

We're a group of volunteers and starting a new scheme in our community. Your website offered us with valuable info to work on. You've done an impressive job and our entire community will be grateful to you.

Laurence
on February 1, 2014 at 6:24 PM said:

Hi there! This post couldn't be written much better! Reading through this article reminds me of my previous roommate! He constantly kept talking about this. I will send this article to him. Fairly certain he will have a very good read. Thanks for sharing!
With havin so much written content do you ever run into any problems of plagorism or copyright violation? My website has a lot of exclusive content I’ve either written myself or outsourced but it appears a lot of it is popping it up all over the internet without my permission. Do you know any methods to help prevent content from being stolen? I’d definitely appreciate it.

Samsung mobile price in Uae

I’m not sure where you are getting your information, but great topic. I needs to spend some time learning much more or understanding more.

Thanks for magnificent information I was looking for this information for my mission.

money illusion

Hi there, yup this piece of writing is in fact fastidious and I have learned lot of things from it concerning blogging. thanks.

cash flow youtube

Good article! We will be linking to this particularly great article on our website. Keep up the great writing.

earn online legit

great submit, very informative. I wonder why the other specialists of this sector do not notice this. You should continue your writing. I’m sure, you have a huge readers’ base already!
What's up to every one, it's in fact a pleasant for me to
go to see this web site, it includes useful information.

personal loan apply
on February 3, 2014 at 12:06 PM said:

Good day! Do you know if they make any plugins to
protect against hackers? I'm kinda paranoid about losing everything I've worked hard on.
Any tips?

starting an internet business
on February 3, 2014 at 3:49 PM said:

Howdy great blog! Does running a blog similar
to this take a large amount of work? I have no knowledge of computer programming but I
was hoping to start my own blog in the near future. Anyhow, if you have any suggestions or tips for new
blog owners please share. I know this is off subject nevertheless I just had
to ask. Appreciate it!

Sammie
on February 3, 2014 at 6:10 PM said:

I was wondering if you ever thought of changing the structure of your website?
It's very well written; I love what you've got to say. But maybe you could a little more in the way
of content so people could connect with it better.
You've got an awful lot of text for only having 1 or 2
pictures. Maybe you could space it out better?

advertising research foundation
on February 3, 2014 at 9:09 PM said:

It's going to be finish of mine day, except before ending I am reading this enormous article to increase my know-
how.

Jannie
on February 3, 2014 at 10:52 PM said:

Hi to every one, the contents present at this web page
are actually awesome for people experience, well, keep up the nice work fellows.
Howdy! I know this is kinda off topic however, I’d figured I’d ask. Would you be interested in trading links or maybe guest writing a blog post or vice-versa? My site covers a lot of the same subjects as yours and I believe we could greatly benefit from each other. If you are interested feel free to shoot me an e-mail. I look forward to hearing from you! Fantastic blog by the way!

Annetta
on February 4, 2014 at 3:38 PM said:

An outstanding share! I have just forwarded this onto a co-worker who had been doing a little homework on this. And he in fact bought me lunch simply because I discovered it for him... lol. So let me reword this.... Thank YOU for the meal! But yeah, thanks for spending the time to discuss this subject here on your blog.

pathway Profits-online ed 4 e commerce
on February 4, 2014 at 7:12 PM said:

Very soon this web page will be famous amid all blogging people, due to it’s good articles

how to make money from home
on February 4, 2014 at 10:19 PM said:

It’s a shame you don’t have a donate button! I’d definitely donate to this outstanding blog! I guess for now I’ll settle for bookmarking and adding your RSS feed to my Google account. I look forward to fresh updates and will talk about this site with my Facebook group. Chat soon!

Christal
on February 5, 2014 at 4:51 AM said:

Everything is very open with a very clear explanation of the challenges. It was really informative.
Your site is very helpful. Thank you for sharing!

**Stocks Ready To Split**

on February 5, 2014 at 4:59 AM said:

This is the right web site for anyone who really wants to find out about this topic. You know so much its almost tough to argue with you (not that I actually would want to…HaHa). You definitely put a brand new spin on a subject which has been written about for a long time. Wonderful stuff, just excellent!

**Augusta**

on February 5, 2014 at 2:23 PM said:

Great blog! Do you have any tips and hints for aspiring writers? I’m hoping to start my own site soon but I’m a little lost on everything. Would you advise starting with a free platform like WordPress or go for a paid option? There are so many choices out there that I’m completely overwhelmed...

Any ideas? Thanks a lot!

**money zen app**

on February 5, 2014 at 6:45 PM said:

These are genuinely impressive ideas in about blogging.

You have touched some nice things here. Any way keep up wrnting.