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***Les technologies de l'information et de la communication
et le développement social au Sénégal:
Un état des lieux***

UNRISD Technology and Society Programme Paper 1

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This is the first report to be published by the UNRISD research project on Information Technologies and Social Development in Senegal. It provides an overview of what is currently known about the changing role of these new technologies in the national economy and society.

The report begins with a comprehensive history of the development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in Senegal, from the first use of the telegraph in 1859 through the remarkable expansion of telephony and the current growth of access to the Internet.

The report provides up-to-date figures on the role of ICTs in the Senegalese economy. In 1999, the telecommunications sector grew by roughly 9.5 per cent, compared to 6 per cent for the economy as a whole. In particular, there has been a phenomenal jump in cellular telephone use in three years (from 7 000 to 100 000 users between the end of 1997 and the end of 2000).

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Interestingly, the report reveals that the most dynamic growth in ICT use seems to be occurring in the informal sector. Migrants are particularly important users of fixed and mobile phones, and even of e-mail and Internet telephony.

The report shows that Internet access has also grown, though far more slowly. In 2000, there were 13 Internet service providers in the country, and approximately 8,500 registered subscribers. In addition, a dozen or more cyber cafés opened in Dakar, and more were being set up in most large provincial towns.

The report finds that the impact of the changing ICT environment on young people and women is of central importance, given their pervasive marginalization in much of Senegalese society. The report analyzes the impact – positive and negative - that introduction of the Internet has had in the education system. It also underlines the significant role of new kinds of radio broadcasting in the democratization of the country.

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