

Preface

Communication environments of the future will be fundamentally different than those in use today. One basic assumption underlies all of the reasoning of this book—software is acquiring a definitive role in almost every sector of virtually every industry, including communications. In particular, the integration of new ICT capabilities will determine and shape the evolution of communication systems toward a new smart environment supporting and enriching the human need to “communicate”. This integration will undoubtedly shake the traditional foundations of the telecoms industry.

The main focus of the book is to determine whether the communications industry is undergoing a structural transformation or a consolidation of the current technologies, systems, and business models based on connectivity. Its basic statement is that there is a technological paradigm shift under way called *softwarization*. The possibility that the ICT ecosystem is moving toward the adoption of new technologies that could enable new scenarios and application domains backed up by networking (e.g., smart environments) is thoroughly analyzed.

This book distinguishes itself by its use of a user-centric approach, i.e., an analysis of the technological evolution as driven by the need to satisfy the requirements of people (customers and users). Adopting the user’s viewpoint offers a totally different perspective of the technological evolution and can stimulate new and more compelling choices in the service and network frameworks. Specifically, the book shows how different technologies can be integrated with a user-centric approach and how that process offers the possibility of creating a new kind of network enabling new, appealing scenarios.

Covering a range of pertinent subjects, this book presents an analysis of the major technological trends that have (and that will have) an impact on the telecommunications ecosystem, such as software-defined networking, virtualization, and cloud computing. These technologies can be combined in different ways

to support “traditional” or more advanced technological infrastructures. Specific business considerations related to technological choices are put forward, followed by a set of possible scenarios characterized by the prevalence of specific technologies and their related business models.

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