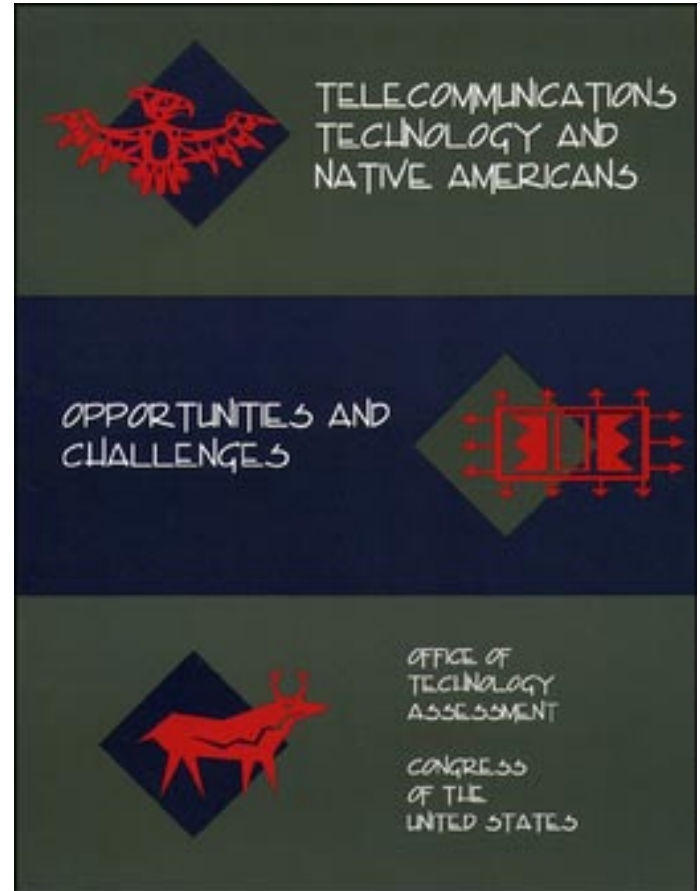


*Telecommunications Technology and Native
Americans: Opportunities and Challenges*

August 1995

OTA-ITC-621



Recommended Citation: U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, *Telecommunications Technology and Native Americans: Opportunities and Challenges*, OTA-ITC-621 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, August 1995).

Foreword

Telecommunications Technology and Native Americans: Opportunities and Challenges examines the potential of telecommunications to improve the socioeconomic conditions of Native Americans—American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians—living in rural, remote areas, and to help them maintain their cultures and exercise control over their lives and destinies.

The report discusses the opportunities for Native Americans to use telecommunications (including computer networking, videoconferencing, multimedia, digital and wireless technologies, and the like) in the realms of culture, education, health care, economic development, and governance. It also explores the challenges and barriers to realizing these opportunities, notably the need to improve the technology infrastructure (and access to it), technical training, leadership, strategic partnerships, and telecommunications planning on Indian reservations and in Alaska Native villages and Native Hawaiian communities.

Prepared at the request of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, this is the first federal government report on Native American telecommunications. It provides a framework for technology planning and policy actions by Congress and relevant federal agencies, as well as by Native leaders and governments. Native Americans were involved throughout the study. OTA made site visits to six states and consulted with Native leaders and technology experts in about two dozen other states. Computer networking was used extensively for research and outreach, and OTA developed the Native American Resource Page for this study, a World Wide Web home page accessible via OTA Online (<http://www.ota.gov/nativea.html>).

OTA appreciates the assistance of the project advisory panelists, a majority of whom are Native American, and federal agency workshop participants, as well as the many Native government, federal and state government, library, educational, business, and other groups and individuals who participated in the study. OTA values their perspectives and comments; the report is, however, solely the responsibility of OTA.



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Note: OTA appreciates the valuable assistance and thoughtful comments provided by the advisory panelists. The panel does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

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