Development Agendas in the Age of Network Economies
Abdul Paliwala – University of Warwick

Abstract
The recently held World Summit on Information Society has suggested many solutions to the uneven global distribution of digital information and technology. Yet one area in which the deliberations were remarkably silent was that of the role of intellectual property rights. In theory, these issues are being considered by the World Intellectual Property Organisation in its new Sub-Committee on the Development Agenda, but there is more than a suspicion that they have been pushed under the carpet.

This paper examines the role of digital intellectual property rights in the global digital divide between developed, newly industrialising and developing countries. In particular it considers ways in which ideas of fundamental transformation of relations of production arising from what Castells, Benkler and Hardt and Negri of Network Society or Network Information Economy and Global Commons require rethinking of property relations not only in relation to developed countries in issues such as Open Source and the Global Commons, but in developed countries.

It is suggested that ideas such as Lessig’s Creative Commons, which have been developed in the context of developed countries, need to be readjusted in the context of developing countries to take into account the ways in which people collaborate in the development and application of IT and require deconstruction of notions such as piracy.