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Human Services in the Age of New Technology

Harmonising Social Work
and Computerisation

European Centre Vienna

Avebury

Part One of the book sets the scene. The first chapter discusses the reasons why computerisation has been so unsuccessful in the past and then explores a range of issues which need to be addressed in the future if computerisation is to be successful. Chapter Two looks at personal responses to computerisation amongst social workers and investigates different responses from social work agencies.

Part Two deals with conceptual, organisational and policy issues. Chapter Three tackles the issues of identity and education: What is IT? What is social work? And what is the relationship between them? Chapter Four briefly dips into organisational theory and then explores the difficulties and contradictions of computerising a hybrid, part rational, part natural systems organisational structure. Policy issues are explored in Chapter Five.

Part Three is explicitly practical. Chapter Six deals with the implementation of information technology in the social services: management issues; staff involvement; resource requirements; and information needs. Finally, Chapter Seven looks at IT in action in the social services, explicitly exploring IT innovations of direct use to social work practice which are up and running and of demonstrable benefit.

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