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## **NEW GDI STUDY «THE FUTURE OF A NETWORKED SOCIETY – NEW RULES, NEW PLAYMAKERS»**

**The GDI Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute has released a study on the digital connectivity of society in 2030. Commissioned by Swisscom, the study provides a basis for public debate on technological developments and their effect on our society, economy and politics.**

Interconnectivity has changed our lives. But that's just the beginning. Digitalisation is permeating nearly all segments of the economy and society – and even our bodies. Man and machine are merging, and the Internet is evolving into our second nature, a digisphere.

In this nearly magically connected world, new areas of conflict are emerging: once this digitalisation has penetrated every aspect of industry and our lives, a technical fault could bring our entire economy to a standstill. So we need to ask ourselves the following questions:

- Security: how do we protect ourselves and our networks from cyberwar and cybercrime?
- Robotisation: to what extent do we allow machines to make decisions for us?
- Network quality: how do we ensure well-functioning, fast and full-coverage networks?
- Privacy: how do we ensure privacy and data protection in the network of the future? Whom do we entrust with which data and why?

The size and ubiquity of the Internet cause powers to shift and conflict in politics and the economy to increase. Corporations, states and users fight to assert their interests. The Internet is becoming ever more fragmented. How will these developments shape the digital world of tomorrow? The GDI study commissioned by Swisscom outlines four possible scenarios:

1. «Digital 99 per cent»: Society is split into a technocratic elite and a large section that primarily makes ends meet in unqualified jobs, sedated with cheap entertainment.
2. «Low horizon»: People reject new technologies and disconnect from digital streams of information where they can.
3. «Holistic service communities»: People entrust all their data to one big institution that monitors them and looks after them as a sort of “Big Mother”. Life is totally transparent and safe – as long as you don't try to leave the system.
4. «Dynamic freedom»: The Internet is reinvented – radically decentralised, without servers, open, democratic, flexible. Creativity and entrepreneurial spirit thrive, man and machine cooperate, technology regulates itself.

The scenarios are intended to serve as thought experiments, rather than a projection into the future. The important thing is that the course for our future society is set today. With this study, the GDI wants to provoke a debate about the framework conditions in the future. The study «The future of a networked society – new rules, new playmakers» can be found at [gdi.ch/vernetzung](http://gdi.ch/vernetzung).

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