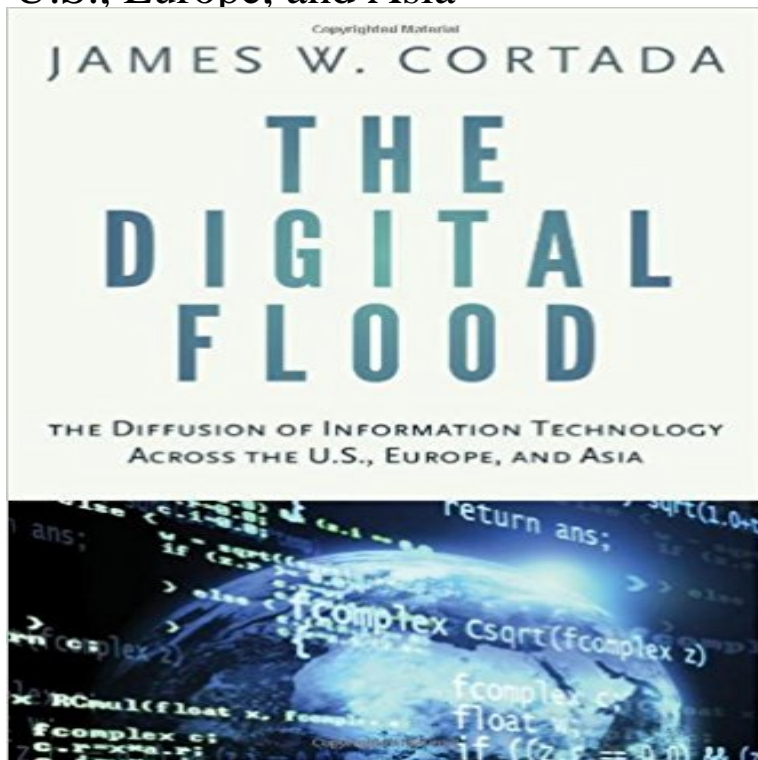


The Digital Flood: The Diffusion of Information Technology Across the U.S., Europe, and Asia



No technology seems to have spread so fast around the world in such a short period of time as computers. It was a phenomenon that predated the arrival of the Internet and that began to change how businesses, governments, and whole societies functioned. The diffusion of information technologies occurred in dozens of countries all over the world with fascinating similarities and differences. In this book, historian James W. Cortada provides the first world-wide history of how computers appeared and were used in North America, all of Europe, and in most of Asia in barely a half century. He explores the causes of diffusion, arguing that more than the technology itself, other conditions were required for the spread of computers, such as standards of living, education, the Cold War, and globalization of the economy. He argues that these technologies are the glue that hold together today's economies and are propelling increases in the quality of life of over a billion people moving into the middle class. Based on archival and secondary research, extensive use of economic data, and detailed country case studies of over a dozen nations, Cortada tells the history of how computers were discovered, invented, built, and used, and the consequences for whole regions. This is the first attempt by any expert to write a global history of information technologies, and specifically, about how these spread. It is economic and business history, but also a guide to those who want to understand what is happening today in such nations as India, China, and other emerging economies as the Computer Revolution continues. He has insights for historians, economists, public officials, and business executives.

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