Government Regulation of the Computer Industry: Computer Communications

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III. GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF THE
COMPUTER INDUSTRY:

A. COMPUTER COMMUNICATIONS

The computer industry is dependent upon the same technology
and serves the same market as the communications industry.
Occasionally this technological and economic interdependence
generates conflict. Wayne Robins details recent technological
developments that are crucial to both industries and describes
their fierce competition for markets. This interrelationship raises
many problems which the federal government must resolve in order
to control effectively the development of data communications.
The present federal regulatory scheme is unsatisfactory, Herbert
E. Marks and Stephen R. Bell maintain, because the areas within
which the computer and communications industries may permis-
sibly operate are not clearly defined. As a result, there is con-
siderable overlap and competition. Congress and the FCC in its
Second Computer Inquiry are presently considering new methods
of regulation.

In his closing commentary, Charles R. Cutler discusses the
effects of certain substantive regulations on both industries and
considers whether regulations should be promulgated at the fed-
eral or state level. He concludes that the stakes are high and the
contest for dominance between the computer and communications
industries is not yet over.