

# Issues in technology policy

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# State and technology

- ▶ Large systems that smooth the functioning of the state. Example online property tax collection
- ▶ Large systems that create APIs that the private sector can use. Often called “digital public infrastructure”
- ▶ Regulate the functioning of tech firms and solutions: competition, privacy, intermediary liability etc

# Systems that smooth the functioning of the state

- ▶ Less controversial
- ▶ Objective is to provide a smoother interface for citizen state interactions
- ▶ Challenges:
  - ▶ Replicated old paper based systems - no process engineering
  - ▶ Mistakes in implementation
  - ▶ Creates monopolies - IRCTC booking system
  - ▶ “Tech solutionism” - detracts from the “real” work of state delivery of services.
  - ▶ Challenges of surveillance

# Digital public infrastructure

- ▶ State (or private sector chosen by state) builds APIs
- ▶ These can be used by the private sector to build products and services
- ▶ Challenges:
  - ▶ The state builds entire systems and does not restrict itself to APIs
  - ▶ Entry barriers for the private sector
  - ▶ Often not “open source” even though it is claimed to be
  - ▶ The dangers of industrial policy in technology
  - ▶ The hidden agenda of nationalism
  - ▶ Concerns around surveillance

# Regulation

- ▶ The state is the regulator of the technology sector.
- ▶ Challenges:
  - ▶ Difficulties of drafting laws and regulations: the draft Telecom Bill, the Digital Data Protection Bill
  - ▶ The usual concerns of state capacity in the functioning of the regulator
  - ▶ Exemptions to the state

Thank you