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Aussat: the social shaping of a satellite system

S. R. Paltridge
University of Wollongong

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AUSSAT : The Social Shaping of a Satellite System.

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Award
of the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

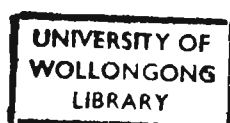
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by

S. R. PALTRIDGE, B.A.(Hons), M.A.(Hons).

**Department of
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1989**



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DECLARATION

This work has not been submitted for a degree to any other university or institution.

S.R PALTRIDGE.

Author's Publications Relating to this Topic

"Crucial Issues in Spaceport Plan Ignored", The Australian, Monday May 23 1988.

"Pie in the Sky: The Heterogeneous Engineering of Aussat", Presented to the AAHPSS Annual Conference, Melbourne University, May 27 1988.

"Aussat & Distance Education", Paper presented at the STS Postgraduate Conference, University of Wollongong, July 1988.

"Satellite Technology and Distance Education in Australia", Submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training inquiry into 'New Technology in Education', July 1988.

'Satellite Broadcasting in Australia', Address at the Postgraduate Open Day, University of Wollongong, November 1988.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the planning process for the first and second generations of Australia's domestic satellite system (Aussat). It focuses on the development of a large sociotechnical system over more than a ten year period and the constellation of interest that became embroiled in one of Australia's most controversial projects. The present work seeks to call forth and highlight those factors most relevant to the shaping of particular aspects of technological development to produce an understanding of how participants in the negotiation of the sociotechnical design sought to assert their interests. In addition, the thesis examines Aussat's effect on its 'impact constituency' and how Australia's experience with the first generation of satellites, in turn shaped an on-going sociotechnical system. It closely details how organizations evolved and developed strategies to maintain the project's momentum.