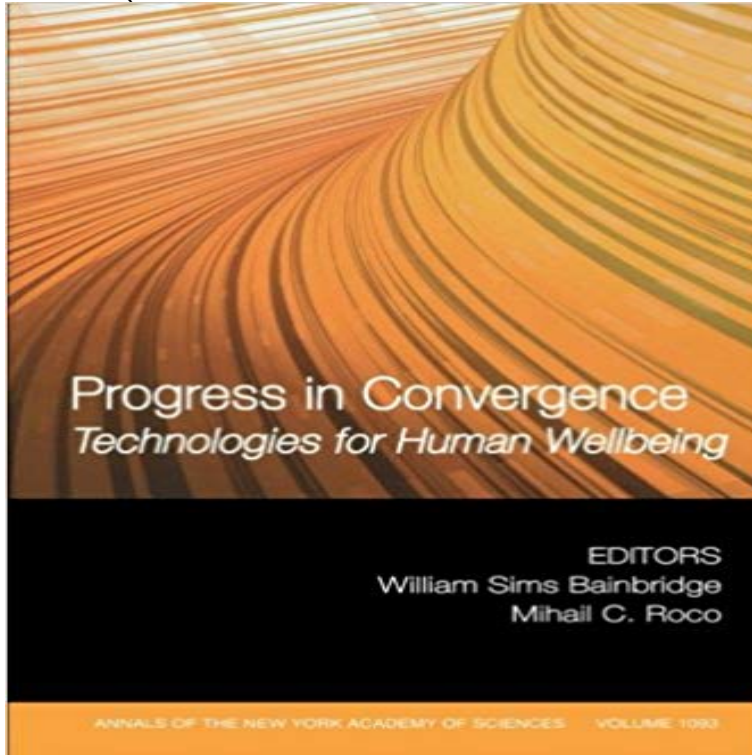


Progress in Convergence: Technologies for Human Wellbeing, Volume 1093 (Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences)



Continued economic growth, human welfare, and national security depend upon constant technological progress; and the chief area for innovation in the coming years will be converging technologies, the synergistic combination of the NBIC fields: nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology, and new technologies based in cognitive science. The significance of convergence was initially recognized in the first National Science Foundation conference on the societal implications of nanotechnology in 2000, which reported that the newly developed ability to measure, manipulate, and organize matter on the nanoscale was revolutionizing science and technology. This volume will mark a major step forward, for three reasons: (1) Enough is understood about convergence now to permit serious consideration of governance issues and the likely human consequences. (2) Among the many convergence-related research projects, several in diverse areas have begun to deliver real results. (3) The network of NBIC researchers and analysts has developed to the point of being a real scientific and engineering community. One cross-cutting theme will be the ethical, legal, and social consequences of technological convergence. Another is the hunt for areas of remarkable research opportunities and the transforming tools required to take maximum advantage of them. Convergence will bring new approaches to what are currently diverse areas of research, such as converging technology platforms, physical and mental performance, human-machine interfaces, human cognition and communication, education and training, work efficiency, and many others. On their own, each of the NBIC technologies offers the potential for extraordinary advancement, but combined their potential is enormous and may provide revolutionary progress in human longevity, quality of life, learning, and

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