HONORABLE MENTION

Herding Cats: Governing Distributed Innovation

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Do-It-Yourself biology, 3D printing, and the sharing economy are equipping ordinary people with new powers to shape their biological, physical, and social environments. This phenomenon of distributed innovation is yielding new goods and services, greater economic productivity, and new opportunities for fulfillment. Distributed innovation also brings new environmental, health, and security risks that demand oversight, yet conventional government regulation may be poorly suited to address these risks. Dispersed and dynamic, distributed innovation requires the development of more flexible tools for oversight and government collaboration with private partners in governance. This Article considers three types of responses to the challenges raised by distributed innovation: large-scale government regulation that capitalizes on society's enhanced capacity to generate, process, and collect data; private governance by nongovernmental intermediaries such as certification programs and supply chain contracts; and reliance on individuals and other regulatory targets to determine and implement their own standards. In choosing from among these options, policymakers might consider criteria such as effectiveness, equity, adaptability, feasibility, and legitimacy.