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Information Technology and Productivity: A Review of the Literature

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Abstract

In recent years, the relationship between information technology (IT) and productivity has become a source of debate. In the 1980s and early 1990s, empirical research on IT productivity generally did not identify significant productivity improvements. More recently, as new data are identified and more sophisticated methodologies are applied, several researchers have found evidence that IT is associated not only with improvement in productivity, but also in intermediate measures, consumer surplus, and economic growth. Nonetheless, new questions emerge as old puzzles fade. This survey reviews the literature, identifies remaining questions, and concludes with recommendations for applications of traditional methodologies to new data sources, as well as alternative, broader metrics of welfare to assess and enhance the benefits of IT.



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