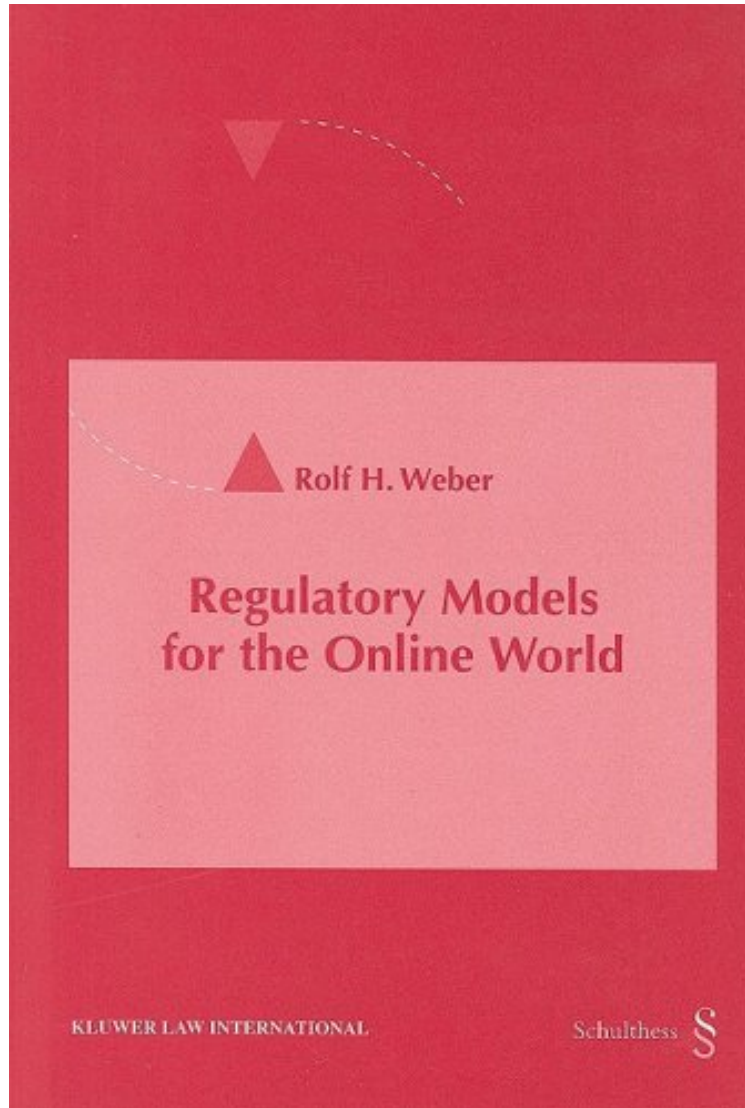


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Global networks have become a major political, economic, and legal topic in discussions among the participants of the "global community." Around the world, governments, legal scholars, and practitioners are in the process of developing theories in respect of the regulation of the online world. These attempts are usually based on a given national "legal

culture"; this approach, however, underestimates the importance of an "umbrella" concept. The purpose of this study accordingly consists in the comparative discussion of basic regulatory models (traditional government regulation, international agreements, self-regulation, code-based-regulation) and in the evaluation of their merits related to different topics that play a role in the online world (market entry, access, infrastructure stability, intellectual property, privacy, bad content, etc.). An easy solution is obviously not possible; however, a detailed examination on a comparative legal basis can give some insights for future regulatory initiatives.