The global knowledge economy in question

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Abstract
Purpose
The aim of this paper is to bring into question the idea of the global knowledge economy.

Design/methodology/approach
The paper explores the characteristics of the knowledge economy, as elaborated by academics and policy makers concerned with knowledge in the contemporary global business environment. A range of available data is reviewed concerning the global distribution of investments in knowledge, information and communications technologies (ICTs), international transactions in knowledge-intensive services and royalty and licensing fees, employment by sector and literacy rates. Such data provide a basis for an initial critical evaluation of the notion of the global knowledge economy.

Findings
The use of the term “global knowledge economy” fails to acknowledge the uneven distribution of knowledge-based economic activity. Moreover, as currently constituted, the idea of a global knowledge economy, which focuses on knowledge as conceptualised in the commercial activities of advanced countries, overlooks the diversity of knowledges present in the world today.

Originality/value
This paper provides the first attempt to question and critically explore the global knowledge economy.

Keywords
Knowledge economy, Communication technologies, Intellectual property, Knowledge management, Globalization

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