

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY

This book gathers inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary perspectives on the effects of today's advances in science and technology on issues ranging from government policy-making to how we see the differences between men and women. The chapters investigate how invention and innovation really take place, how science differs from competing forms of knowledge, and how science and technology could contribute more to the greater good of humanity. For instance, should there be legal restrictions on "immoral inventions?" A key theme that runs throughout the book concerns who is taken into account at each stage and who is affected. The amount of influence users have on technology development and how non-users are factored in are evaluated as the impact of scientific and technological progression on society is investigated, including politics, economy, family life, and ethics.

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SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY

New Perspectives and Directions

EDITED BY

TODD L. PITTINSKY

Stony Brook University, State University of New York



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*For my father, Bernard Pittinsky, who passed on quite a bit of
wisdom, but this in particular: whenever I wanted to buy
some new gadget, he would ask what I needed to do that
I couldn't already do.*

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Prologue

The dramatic advance of science and technology evokes a range of responses. Some see technology diminishing and undermining our society and even our humanity. Others see unbridled potential. What they agree on is that science and technology are profoundly changing our society. Less noted, though, is how profoundly society shapes – or could shape – the course of science and technology.

This collection offers a broad, deep, and accessible set of essays on the interplay between science, technology, and society. It reflects a very broad range of disciplines and an international group of contributors.

Science and technology studies (STS), from its birth in the 1960s, has attracted interest from a wide array of disciplines and subfields. Today, as the pace and power of science and technology become ever more apparent – with consequences literally at our fingertips – interest is exploding.

This increasing interest in the interplay and intersections of science, technology, and society is paralleled by an ever-growing desire – indeed, an imperative – for STS scholarship to make a difference. College educators are trying to devise new core curriculums that will adequately equip students to live comfortably in a world dominated by technology and science. The stakes in our real lives are too high for inquiry and examination to remain in the ivory tower.

Whether you are a professional researcher, eager to understand more about the contours and frontiers of STS, or a general reader drawn to this fascinating domain, or a student in a course, we invite you to dive in. Whether you single out a particular topic or make your way through most or all of the collection, you will be challenged and rewarded with new perspectives and new directions.

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