

TECHNOLOGY AND LITERATURE

Whereas previous books have explored how literature depicts or discusses scientific concepts, this book argues that literature *is* a technology. It shows how literature has been shaped by technological revolutions, and reveals the essential work that literature has done in helping to uncover the consequences of new technologies. Individual chapters focus on how specific literary technologies – the development of writing, the printing press, the typewriter, the computer – changed the kinds of stories it was possible to tell, and how one could tell them. They also cover the way in which literature has engaged with non-literary technologies – clocks, compasses, trains, telegraphs, cameras, bombs, computer networks – to help its readers to work through the new social configurations and new possibilities for human identity and imagination that they unveil. Human life is inescapably mediated through technology; literature demonstrates this, and thus helps its readers to engage consciously and actively with their technological worlds.

ADAM HAMMOND is the author of *The Far Shore: Indie Games, Superbrothers, and the Making of Jett* (2021) and *Literature in the Digital Age* (2016), and coauthor of *Modernism: Keywords* (2014). His work has appeared in *Wired* and the *Globe and Mail* and has been profiled on BBC and CBC Radio.

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Cambridge Critical Concepts focuses on the important ideas animating twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary studies. Each concept addressed in the series has had a profound impact on literary studies, as well as on other disciplines, and already has a substantial critical bibliography surrounding it. This series captures the dynamic critical energies transmitted across twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary landscapes: the concepts critics bring to reading, interpretation, and criticism. By addressing the origins, development and application of these ideas, the books collate and clarify how these particular concepts have developed, while also featuring fresh insights and establishing new lines of enquiry.

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Timeline

- c. 5000 BCE: Writing in the Western tradition begins as an instrument of clerks and accountants in Mesopotamia
- c. 1000 BCE: First evidence of written words being graphically divided by spaces, vertical strokes, or raised dots
- c. 750 BCE: The Greeks modify the Phoenician alphabet, rendering its sounds from a Semitic language (Phoenician) into Indo-European Greek
- c. 150 BCE: Roman scribes abandon word-division in favor of spaceless *scriptio continua*
- 200: Invention of paper in China
- c. 700: Irish and Anglo-Saxon scribes reject *scriptio continua* when copying texts in Latin, inserting spaces between words
- c. 1000: Invention of printing with movable clay type in China
- c. 1100: Developed centuries earlier in China, the magnetic compass is first mentioned in England
- 1199: Invention of paper in Europe
- c. 1300: Mechanical clocks spread rapidly in Europe
- 1377: The *Jikki*, the earliest surviving text printed with movable metal type, is printed in Korea
- c. 1436: Gutenberg invents his printing press
- 1476: Introduction of movable type printing in England
- 1539: Juan Pablos of Italy sets up a printing press in Mexico City, the first in the Western hemisphere
- 1557: The Worshipful Company of Stationers receives a royal charter; its membership has the sole right in England to print, publish, or traffic in the printed word
- 1610: Publication of Galileo's astronomical treatise *Sidereus Nuncius*
- 1695: Lapse of the Licensing Act sees the proliferation of printed texts in England
- 1702: First daily newspaper, the *Daily Courant*, is published in London

Timeline

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- 1710: First copyright law, the Statute of Anne, passed in 1695, comes into force in Great Britain
- 1798: Nicolas Louis Robert invents a machine for the mechanical creation of paper at the Essonnes Mill in France
- c. 1800: The Earl Stanhope invents an iron hand press
- c. 1810: Friedrich Koenig and Andreas Bauer create the first steam-powered cylindrical press
- 1814: *The Times* of London installs a steam-powered press
- 1839: Louis Daguerre discovers he can record light onto a silver-coated photographic plate
- 1844: F. B. Morse sends the first long-distance telegraph from Baltimore to Washington with the message “What hath God wrought!”
- 1856: Submarine telegraph line laid under the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Newfoundland
- 1857: Édouard-Léon Scott patents the phonautograph, precursor of the phonograph
- 1876: Alexander Graham Bell transmits the first telephonic message
- 1895: Guglielmo Marconi broadcasts the first radio signal
- 1895: Discovery of X-rays by Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen
- 1900: Haida poets Ghandl and Skaay recite works to John Swanton
- 1906: Reginald Aubrey Fessenden produces the first true “radio broadcast,” a Christmas program sent to United Fruit Company ships in the Atlantic and Caribbean Seas
- 1935: First Penguin paperback appears
- 1939: US paperback revolution begins with the launch of Pocket Books
- 1945: Vannevar Bush’s “Memex” reading device is conceptualized
- 1962: Marshall McLuhan’s *Gutenberg Galaxy* is published
- 1964: Joseph Weizenbaum’s experimental *ELIZA* program is developed
- 1967: Formal release of the first ASCII standard for the digital representation of roman letters, numbers, and other functions on the modern US keyboard
- 1971: Project Gutenberg online text repository founded by Michael S. Hart
- 1976: Text adventure computer game *Adventure* is released

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