Technology & Society

ENTC 3020

Society is...
as defined by
Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary
© 1981 by G & C Merriam Co.

Society

3a. An enduring and cooperating social group whose members have developed organized patterns of relationships through interaction with one another.
Society

3b. A community, nation, or broad grouping of people having common traditions, institutions, and collective activities and interests.

Civilization is...

as defined by Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary © 1981 by G & C Merriam Co.

Civilization

1a. A relatively high level of cultural and technological development.
   – Specif: the stage of cultural development at which writing and the keeping of written records is attained.
Civilization
1b. The culture characteristic of a particular time or place.
2. The process of becoming civilized.

Civilization
3a. Refinement of thought, manner, and taste.
3b. A situation of urban comfort.

Technology
• Three Points of View
• Emmanuel G. Mesthene from *Technology and Culture* 10:4 (1969)
• “Establishment” Perspective
Technology is a Blessing

• Utopian promise.
• Technology is “good.”
• Motor of all progress.
• Permanent prosperity.
• Humans are in command.

Technology is a Curse

• Robs people of jobs, security, and privacy.
• Autonomous and uncontrollable.
• Fosters materialistic values.
• Destructive to religion.

Technology is of No Concern

• Recognized factor in social change.
• Education & communication make people more adaptable.
• This POV ignores the massive effect of new technologies.
Inventions

• No invention can be invented until the culture can support it.
• Technology is not independent of the society in which it develops.

Inventions

• Simply because we can does not mean we should.
• Desirable technologies are sometimes not pursued because of ignorance.

Technologies Should:

• Reduce costs
• Increase efficiencies
• Reduce problems
Government & Technology

• When social costs get too high, governments step in to regulate technologies
• Regulations limit individual freedom of decision making

Political resolutions of technology-based problems are typically ineffective.