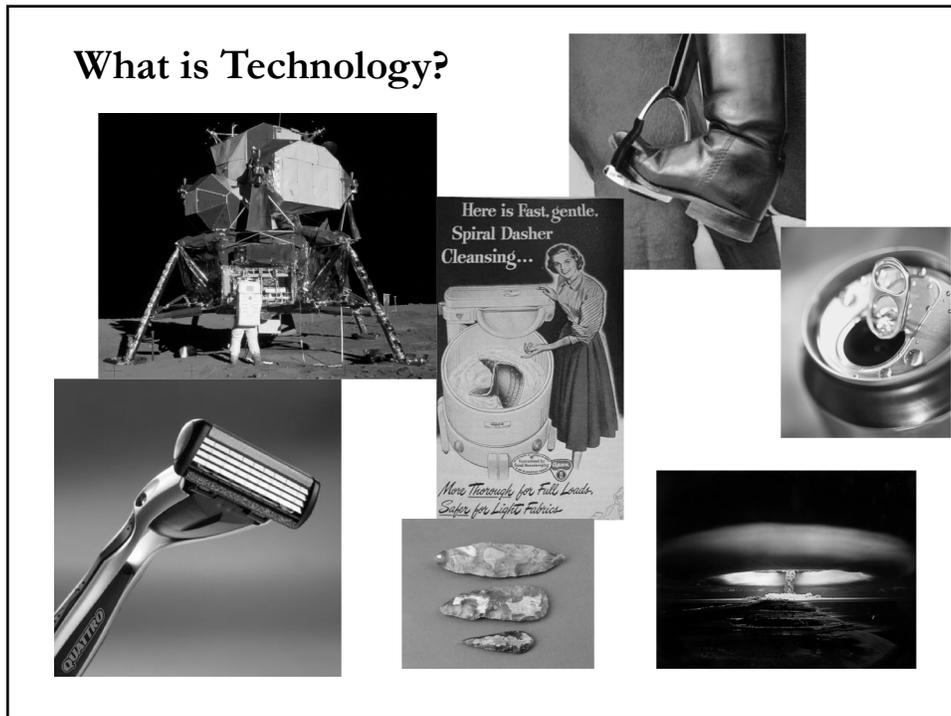


What is Technology?

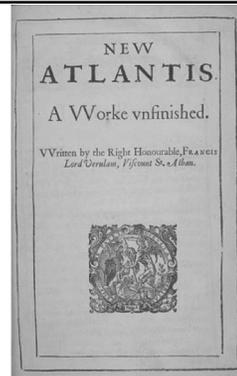


“Technology”

- etymology of the word
- derived from the Greek *techne* (art, craft) + *logos* (word, speech)
 - “a discourse on the arts”
- rarely used before 1880s
- before that time, what did people use to refer to what we call technology now?
 - “mechanic” or “useful arts”

Francis Bacon – *New Atlantis* (1624)

- was an early important work on the “mechanic arts”
- utopian novel
- various inventions predicted which would improve life
- equated two things:
 - mastery over nature = progress



Use of “Technology”

- Significant change in perception of “mechanical arts” during 19th century
- mechanical arts became known as agents of “progress”
- different from science
- easy to see the effects
- primarily associated with machinery

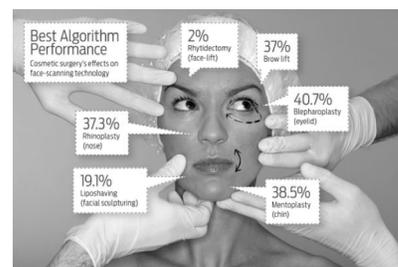


“Technology” comes into usage

- until 1860s, “technology” meant the discussion of the mechanical arts
- after that, it came to denote the mechanical arts
- Germans first used it commonly (*technologie*, *technik*)
- gained wide currency after World War I
- only after 1950s, came to be associated with things/practices that we associate it with now

What do we mean by it now?

- does it make us different from other animals?
- Nye: “technology is the production of superfluities”
- technologies are tools that allow us to fulfill some necessity beyond simply living
- technologies can be tangible or intangible
- definition has moved from something specific (machines) to something more difficult to define



The “meaning” of technology

- Nye, p. 3: “... *the meaning of a tool is inseparable from the stories that surround it.*”
- Nye, p. 5: “... *to conceive of a tool is to think in time and to imagine change. The existence of a tool also immediately implies that a cultural group has reached a point where it can remember past actions and reproduce them in memory. Tools require the ability to recollect what one has done and to see actions as a sequence in time.*”