

american technological sublime david e nye

American Technological Sublime David E Nye: Exploring Awe and Innovation in America's Technological History

american technological sublime david e nye is a phrase that captures the essence of how technology in the United States has been perceived not just as a tool or a means to an end, but as a profound source of awe, wonder, and even spiritual experience. The concept of the "technological sublime" has been extensively explored by historian David E. Nye, whose work delves into the cultural and emotional impact of technological advancements in American society. Understanding this notion provides fascinating insights into the intersection of technology, culture, and identity in the U.S., and how Americans have historically responded to the power and mystery of machines and innovation.

What Is the American Technological Sublime?

At its core, the technological sublime refers to the overwhelming feelings of awe, wonder, and sometimes fear inspired by large-scale technological achievements. Think of the first time people witnessed the power of a steam engine, the towering suspension bridges, or the massive skyscrapers that reshaped city skylines. In America, these reactions were often tied to a broader sense of progress, destiny, and the conquering of nature through human ingenuity.

David E. Nye's exploration of this topic goes beyond mere admiration for machines. He examines how these technological marvels created an almost spiritual experience, blending the aesthetic with the practical, and how this shaped American attitudes toward progress and modernity. His work reveals that technology, in this sublime sense, was not just about utility but also about inspiring a new kind of emotional and cultural response.

The Role of David E. Nye in Defining the Technological Sublime

David E. Nye is a prominent historian of technology who has contributed significantly to our understanding of how Americans have historically related to technology on an emotional and cultural level. His book, "American Technological Sublime," published in 1994, is considered a landmark in this field. Nye's scholarship is notable for blending history with cultural studies, showing that technology is not just a neutral instrument but a phenomenon that evokes deep feelings and reflections.

Contextualizing Technology in American Culture

Nye argues that in the American context, technology was often seen as a source of national pride and identity. From the 19th century onward, technological achievements symbolized the country's ability to harness nature and expand its frontiers. This wasn't just about economic growth or military power; it was about the emotional resonance of seeing machines and infrastructure as manifestations of American values like innovation, freedom, and progress.

Technological Marvels and Public Perception

One of Nye's key insights is that various technological wonders—railroads, electric power plants, airplanes, and later nuclear reactors—were perceived as sublime spectacles. These were experiences that transcended everyday life and stirred feelings similar to those evoked by natural phenomena like mountains or waterfalls. This framing helps explain why technology often held a revered place in the American imagination, sometimes bordering on the religious.

Examples of the American Technological Sublime in History

To grasp the full impact of the technological sublime, it's helpful to look at some emblematic examples from American history that David E. Nye discusses in his work.

The Railroad and the Expansion Westward

The railroad was one of the earliest and most powerful symbols of the technological sublime. As steel tracks carved through vast landscapes, connecting distant parts of the continent, Americans marveled at the ability to conquer space and time. The locomotive's smoke and steam, the rhythmic clatter of wheels, and the sheer scale of the networks created an almost theatrical spectacle that captured imaginations and fueled dreams of progress.

The Rise of Skyscrapers and Urban Modernity

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, skyscrapers became icons of the technological sublime. Buildings like the Empire State Building weren't just functional office spaces; they represented human mastery over gravity, engineering, and design. Standing at their base, people felt dwarfed yet uplifted, struck by the grandeur of human-made structures rising to unprecedented heights.

Electrification and the Glow of Modern Life

Electricity was another transformative force that inspired the technological sublime. The glow of electric lights, the hum of power stations, and the promise of a future illuminated by technology changed how people experienced their environments. Nye highlights how electric lighting was often described in almost mystical terms, bringing a new kind of night-time beauty and a sense of endless possibility.

Implications of the Technological Sublime for Modern America

Understanding the American technological sublime David E. Nye explores can shed light on contemporary attitudes toward technology, innovation, and even environmental concerns.

Technology as Identity and Inspiration

The tradition of viewing technology as a source of awe continues to influence how Americans perceive innovation today. Silicon Valley, space exploration, and cutting-edge robotics are often framed not just as economic drivers but as arenas of national pride and cultural significance. This enduring narrative helps explain why technology remains deeply embedded in American identity.

Balancing Awe with Critique

While the technological sublime emphasizes wonder, Nye also encourages a balanced perspective. The same technologies that inspire can also disrupt societies, environments, and ways of life. Recognizing the emotional pull of technology helps us understand why it can be difficult to critically assess its impacts, but it also opens the door to more thoughtful conversations about sustainability, ethics, and the future of innovation.

Lessons from David E. Nye's Analysis for Today's Technological Landscape

Drawing from Nye's concept of the technological sublime, there are several ways we can engage more meaningfully with the technologies shaping our world.

- **Appreciate the Cultural Dimensions of Technology:** Technology is not just functional; it carries cultural meanings and emotional weight that shape public perceptions and policy.

- **Foster Awe Without Blind Admiration:** It's healthy to be inspired by technological achievements, but staying critical ensures we remain aware of potential downsides.
- **Encourage Inclusive Narratives:** The sublime experience has often centered on dominant cultural perspectives; expanding narratives to include diverse voices enriches our understanding.
- **Balance Innovation with Responsibility:** Recognizing technology's power to awe should go hand in hand with responsibility toward environmental stewardship and social equity.

Why the American Technological Sublime Still Matters

In an era dominated by rapid technological change—from artificial intelligence to renewable energy—the emotional and cultural dimensions that David E. Nye illuminates remain highly relevant. The American technological sublime David E. Nye describes helps us see that technology is not only about gadgets and systems but also about the human experience, our dreams, fears, and aspirations.

Reflecting on this concept encourages us to approach technology with both wonder and wisdom, appreciating its capacity to transform lives while remaining mindful of its broader implications. Whether standing beneath a massive wind turbine or marveling at the latest space launch, the technological sublime reminds us of the profound connection between human creativity and the world we shape.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the central theme of David E. Nye's 'American Technological Sublime'?

The central theme of David E. Nye's 'American Technological Sublime' is how technological advancements in America have inspired awe and a sense of the sublime, reflecting cultural values and shaping national identity.

How does David E. Nye define the 'technological sublime' in his work?

David E. Nye defines the 'technological sublime' as the overwhelming feeling of awe and wonder that technology evokes, similar to the natural sublime, but rooted in human-made machines and infrastructure.

What historical periods does 'American Technological Sublime' focus on?

'American Technological Sublime' primarily focuses on the 19th and early 20th centuries, exploring the impact of industrialization, railroads, skyscrapers, and electrical technology on American society.

Why is the concept of the sublime important in understanding American technological history according to Nye?

The concept of the sublime is important because it captures the emotional and cultural responses to technology, showing how Americans perceived technological progress not just practically but also spiritually and aesthetically.

How does David E. Nye link technology and national identity in his book?

Nye argues that technological achievements became symbols of American exceptionalism and progress, helping to construct a national identity centered on innovation and mastery over nature.

What role do machinery and infrastructure play in the 'American Technological Sublime'?

Machinery and infrastructure like railroads, bridges, and skyscrapers serve as physical manifestations of the technological sublime, representing human ingenuity and power.

How has 'American Technological Sublime' influenced the study of technology and culture?

The book has influenced scholars to consider emotional and cultural dimensions of technology, encouraging interdisciplinary approaches that combine history, sociology, and cultural studies.

Can the concept of the technological sublime be applied to modern technology according to Nye?

While Nye's work focuses on historical technologies, the concept of the technological sublime can be extended to modern innovations that inspire awe, such as space exploration and digital technology.

What critiques or limitations are associated with Nye's

'American Technological Sublime'?

Some critiques point out that Nye's focus on awe and progress may overlook the negative social and environmental impacts of technology, and that the sublime experience was not universal across different social groups.

Additional Resources

American Technological Sublime and the Insights of David E. Nye

american technological sublime david e nye is a phrase that encapsulates a critical examination of the intersection between technology, culture, and perception within the American context. David E. Nye, a prominent historian of technology, has extensively explored how Americans have historically experienced and interpreted technological advancements not just as tools or systems, but as sources of awe and transcendence. His work delves into the notion of the "technological sublime," a concept that reflects the emotional and philosophical responses elicited by encounters with grand technological achievements.

Understanding the American technological sublime through David E. Nye's scholarship provides a profound lens for investigating how technology shapes national identity, cultural values, and societal aspirations. This article explores Nye's contributions, contextualizes the technological sublime within American history, and examines its relevance in contemporary technological discourse.

David E. Nye's Concept of the Technological Sublime

David E. Nye's exploration of the technological sublime is deeply rooted in historical analysis and cultural theory. His seminal book, *American Technological Sublime*, traces the evolution of American attitudes toward technology from the 19th century through modern times. Nye argues that technology in America has often been perceived not merely as functional but as sublime — evoking feelings of wonder, fear, and transcendence similar to those traditionally associated with natural phenomena like mountains and storms.

In Nye's view, the technological sublime is a cultural construct that reflects Americans' complex relationship with progress and modernity. The steam engine, skyscrapers, the railroad, and later electrical grids and nuclear power plants were not just innovations; they were monumental symbols that challenged human limitations and inspired a sense of awe. This emotional response, Nye posits, helped forge a uniquely American narrative of mastery over nature and destiny.

The Historical Trajectory of the Technological Sublime

Nye's work meticulously charts the rise and transformation of the technological sublime

across different eras:

- **19th Century Industrialization:** The Industrial Revolution introduced massive mechanical structures and machines that dwarfed human scale. Railroads and steamships became icons of power and speed, evoking a sublime experience rooted in the domination of space and time.
- **Early 20th Century Urbanization:** Skyscrapers and bridges, such as the Brooklyn Bridge, embodied technological achievement and urban grandeur. These structures transformed cityscapes and symbolized human ingenuity, inspiring reverence and a new aesthetic appreciation.
- **Mid-20th Century Technological Expansion:** The rise of electricity, the atomic bomb, and space exploration shifted the sublime into realms of both optimism and existential anxiety. Nye highlights how technology became a double-edged sword — a source of hope and dread.

This historical trajectory illustrates how the technological sublime has been deeply intertwined with American cultural identity, reflecting broader societal hopes and fears about the future.

The Cultural and Psychological Dimensions of the Technological Sublime

Central to David E. Nye's analysis is the psychological impact of technological grandeur on American society. The technological sublime does not merely describe physical scale or complexity but the emotional and cognitive responses triggered by technology's overwhelming presence.

Emotional Responses: Awe and Anxiety

Nye identifies a duality in the American technological sublime: it inspires both awe and anxiety. On one hand, technological marvels generate fascination and pride, offering visions of progress and human potential. On the other hand, they provoke fear of uncontrollable forces, environmental degradation, and ethical dilemmas.

For example, the atomic bomb exemplifies this dual nature. Its creation represented ultimate scientific achievement and national power but simultaneously introduced the terrifying possibility of annihilation. This ambivalence is a recurring theme in Nye's exploration, emphasizing how technology's sublime character shapes public discourse and cultural narratives.

Technology as a National Myth

Another dimension of the technological sublime in Nye's work is its role in constructing national myths. Technology becomes a symbol through which Americans articulate ideals of freedom, innovation, and destiny. The frontier spirit, often linked with westward expansion, finds a parallel in technological conquest — a narrative of taming chaos and creating order through human ingenuity.

This mythologizing process elevates technology beyond utilitarian function to a cultural iconography that informs identity and collective memory. Nye's scholarship encourages readers to see technological achievements as cultural texts that reveal underlying values and tensions within American society.

Relevance of the American Technological Sublime in Contemporary Society

Although David E. Nye's foundational work focuses on historical contexts, the concept of the American technological sublime remains highly relevant in the 21st century. Today's technological landscape — dominated by digital innovation, artificial intelligence, and space exploration — continues to evoke the sublime, albeit in more complex and nuanced ways.

Digital and Virtual Realities

Contemporary technologies such as the internet, virtual reality, and big data analytics have introduced new forms of technological sublimity. Unlike the tangible, physical infrastructures of Nye's earlier examples, these digital realms offer intangible yet expansive experiences that challenge human perception.

The vastness of cyberspace and the rapid evolution of AI often elicit reactions akin to the sublime: a mix of fascination with potential and apprehension about loss of control and privacy. This marks an evolution of the technological sublime, adapting traditional emotional responses to new technological modalities.

Space Exploration and the Sublime Frontier

Space exploration remains a powerful symbol of the American technological sublime. Building on the legacy of the Apollo missions, current endeavors by NASA and private companies like SpaceX continue to inspire awe by pushing the boundaries of human capability.

The sublime here is twofold: the awe of confronting the unknown cosmos and the existential reflection on humanity's place in the universe. Nye's framework helps

contextualize these modern experiences as part of a long-standing cultural engagement with technology as a source of transcendence.

Critiques and Debates Surrounding the Technological Sublime

While David E. Nye's concept of the technological sublime has been influential, it has also sparked debate among scholars and critics. Some argue that the sublime framework risks romanticizing technology and downplaying its social and environmental consequences. Others highlight that the sublime experience is not universal but shaped by race, class, and gender, which can mediate access to and interpretations of technological grandeur.

These critiques invite ongoing reflection on how the technological sublime functions in diverse communities and how it might evolve to address contemporary challenges such as climate change, digital divides, and ethical technology development.

In sum, the American technological sublime as articulated by David E. Nye offers a rich, multifaceted understanding of how technology shapes cultural imagination and emotional experience. By bridging history, psychology, and cultural studies, Nye's work illuminates the enduring power of technology not only to transform materially but also to inspire, terrify, and define the American ethos.

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american technological sublime david e nye: *American Technological Sublime* David E. Nye, 1996-02-28 *American Technological Sublime* continues the exploration of the social construction of technology that David Nye began in his award-winning book *Electrifying America*. Here Nye examines the continuing appeal of the technological sublime (a term coined by Perry Miller) as a key to the nation's history, using as examples the natural sites, architectural forms, and technological achievements that ordinary people have valued intensely. Technology has long played a central role in the formation of Americans' sense of selfhood. From the first canal systems through the moon landing, Americans have, for better or worse, derived unity from the common feeling of awe inspired by large-scale applications of technological prowess. *American Technological Sublime* continues the exploration of the social construction of technology that David Nye began in his award-winning book *Electrifying America*. Here Nye examines the continuing appeal of the technological sublime (a term coined by Perry Miller) as a key to the nation's history, using as examples the natural sites, architectural forms, and technological achievements that ordinary people have valued intensely. *American Technological Sublime* is a study of the politics of perception in industrial society. Arranged chronologically, it suggests that the sublime itself has a history - that sublime experiences

are emotional configurations that emerge from new social and technological conditions, and that each new configuration to some extent undermines and displaces the older versions. After giving a short history of the sublime as an aesthetic category, Nye describes the reemergence and democratization of the concept in the early nineteenth century as an expression of the American sense of specialness. What has filled the American public with wonder, awe, even terror? David Nye selects the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, the eruption of Mt. St. Helens, the Erie Canal, the first transcontinental railroad, Eads Bridge, Brooklyn Bridge, the major international expositions, the Hudson-Fulton Celebration of 1909, the Empire State Building, and Boulder Dam. He then looks at the atom bomb tests and the Apollo mission as examples of the increasing ambivalence of the technological sublime in the postwar world. The festivities surrounding the rededication of the Statue of Liberty in 1986 become a touchstone reflecting the transformation of the American experience of the sublime over two centuries. Nye concludes with a vision of the modern-day consumer sublime as manifested in the fantasy world of Las Vegas.

american technological sublime david e nye: *Seven Sublimes* David E. Nye, 2022 This is a follow-up to Nye's 1994 MITP book *American Technological Sublime*. (*American Technological Sublime* continues the exploration of the social construction of technology that David Nye began in his award-winning book *Electrifying America*. Here Nye examines the continuing appeal of the technological sublime--a term coined by Perry Miller--as a key to the nation's history, using as examples the natural sites, architectural forms, and technological achievements that ordinary people have valued intensely.) This new project extends the sublime into new areas that reflect especially the last fifty years. Thus, in *Seven Sublimes*, Nye explores the natural, technological, disastrous, martial, intangible, digital, and environmental sublimes--areas of sublime experience that were insufficiently recognized or theorized when Nye's earlier book came out nearly twenty-five years ago. Each suggests a different human relation to space and time. Most of these seven sublimes can be experienced at historic sites, ruins, large cities, national parks, or on websites--

american technological sublime david e nye: The American Skyscraper Roberta Moudry, 2005-05-09 Publisher Description

american technological sublime david e nye: *Enterprising Images* John Vincent Jezierski, 2000 The story of the most prolific African American photographers in North America. From its beginnings in York, Pennsylvania, in 1847, until the death of Wallace L. Goodridge in Saginaw, Michigan, in 1922, the Goodridge Brothers Studio was the most significant and enduring African American photographic establishment in North America. In *Enterprising Images*, John Vincent Jezierski tells the story of one of America's first families of photography, documenting the history of the Goodridge studio for three-quarters of a century. The existence of more than one thousand Goodridge photographs in all formats and the family's professional and personal activism enrich the portrait that emerges of this extraordinary family. Weaving photographic and regional history with the narrative of a family whose lives paralleled the social and political happenings of the country, Jezierski provides the reader with a complex family biography for those interested in regional and African American, as well as photographic, history.

american technological sublime david e nye: The Meaning of Technology. Selected Readings from American Sources Montserrat Ginés Gibert, 2010-09 The significance of technology has been subject of continuous discussion. This selection of readings, ranging from primary sources to scholarly and critical works and literary renderings, is intended to furnish elements for that discussion. The history of the United States began with the advent of the industrial revolution, which, in turn, became an integral part of American national and cultural identity. Accordingly, that country provides an appropriate setting in which to examine the debate on technology. The reader is asked to relate the selected views herein included to his or her own notion of technology and progress as they both relate to the also controversial terms of culture, ideology, nature and gender

american technological sublime david e nye: *The Transatlantic Century* Mary Nolan, 2012-10-11 This is a fascinating new overview of European-American relations during the long

twentieth century. Ranging from economics, culture and consumption to war, politics and diplomacy, Mary Nolan charts the rise of American influence in Eastern and Western Europe, its mid-twentieth century triumph and its gradual erosion since the 1970s. She reconstructs the circuits of exchange along which ideas, commodities, economic models, cultural products and people moved across the Atlantic, capturing the differing versions of modernity that emerged on both sides of the Atlantic and examining how these alternately produced co-operation, conflict and ambivalence toward the other. Attributing the rise and demise of American influence in Europe not only to economics but equally to wars, the book locates the roots of many transatlantic disagreements in very different experiences and memories of war. This is an unprecedented account of the American Century in Europe that recovers its full richness and complexity.

american technological sublime david e nye: Surveying the Record Edward Carlos Carter, 1999 Papers given at a conference on Scientific Exploration in North America to 1930 with topics including Cartography, Oceanic Exploration, Art, Anthropology, Lewis and Clark, and the West. This book adds much to our quest for knowledge of who and where we are by illuminating such themes as the role of maps and mapmaking in defining our national identity, the origins of Western exploration, the cultural clash found in the best-selling account of a 19th-century physician-explorer with Arctic peoples, the role of art in the service of science in bringing these newly discovered places and peoples into the Amer. parlor, and the impact of Mormon farming techniques on John Wesley Powell's famed 1878 Arid Region Report. Black and white maps and illus.

american technological sublime david e nye: Fact and Fiction in Global Energy Policy Benjamin K. Sovacool, Marilyn A. Brown, Scott V. Valentine, 2016-04-29 A balanced examination of global energy issues. Energy sustainability and climate change are two of the greatest challenges facing humankind. Unraveling these complex and interconnected issues demands careful and objective assessment. Fact and Fiction in Global Energy Policy aims to change the prevailing discourse by examining fifteen core energy questions from a variety of perspectives, demonstrating how, for each of them, no clear-cut answer exists. Is industry the chief energy villain? Can we sustainably feed and fuel the planet at the same time? Is nuclear energy worth the risk? Should geoengineering be outlawed? Touching on pollution, climate mitigation and adaptation, energy efficiency, government intervention, and energy security, the authors explore interrelated concepts of law, philosophy, ethics, technology, economics, psychology, sociology, and public policy. This book offers a much-needed critical appraisal of the central energy technology and policy dilemmas of our time and the impact of these on multiple stakeholders.

american technological sublime david e nye: New Media, 1740-1915 Lisa Gitelman, Geoffrey B. Pingree, 2003 A cultural history of media that were new media in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

american technological sublime david e nye: Decade of Disaster Ann Larabee, 2000 Gives voice to a diverse cast of disaster participants, including Bhopal widows, people with AIDS, Chernobyl tourists, NASA administrators, international nuclear power authorities, and corporate spokespeople.

american technological sublime david e nye: The Skyscraper and the City Gail Fenske, 2008-08 Once the world's tallest skyscraper, the Woolworth Building is noted for its striking but incongruous synthesis of Beaux-Arts architecture, fanciful Gothic ornamentation, and audacious steel-framed engineering. Here, in the first history of this great urban landmark, Gail Fenske argues that its design serves as a compelling lens through which to view the distinctive urban culture of Progressive-era New York. Fenske shows here that the building's multiplicity of meanings reflected the cultural contradictions that defined New York City's modernity. For Frank Woolworth—founder of the famous five-and-dime store chain—the building served as a towering trademark, for advocates of the City Beautiful movement it suggested a majestic hotel de ville, for technological enthusiasts it represented the boldest of experiments in vertical construction, and for tenants it provided an evocative setting for high-style consumption. Tourists, meanwhile, experienced a spectacular sightseeing destination and avant-garde artists discovered a twentieth-century future. In

emphasizing this faceted significance, Fenske illuminates the process of conceiving, financing, and constructing skyscrapers as well as the mass phenomena of consumerism, marketing, news media, and urban spectatorship that surround them. As the representative example of the skyscraper as a "cathedral of commerce," the Woolworth Building remains a commanding presence in the skyline of lower Manhattan, and the generously illustrated *Skyscraper and the City* is a worthy testament to its importance in American culture.

american technological sublime david e nye: *Rivers in History* Christof Mauch, Thomas G. Zeller, 2008-07-27 Throughout history, rivers have run a wide course through human temporal and spiritual experience. They have demarcated mythological worlds, framed the cradle of Western civilization, and served as physical and psychological boundaries among nations. Rivers have become a crux of transportation, industry, and commerce. They have been loved as nurturing providers, nationalist symbols, and the source of romantic lore but also loathed as sites of conflict and natural disaster. *Rivers in History* presents one of the first comparative histories of rivers on the continents of Europe and North America in the modern age. The contributors examine the impact of rivers on humans and, conversely, the impact of humans on rivers. They view this dynamic relationship through political, cultural, industrial, social, and ecological perspectives in national and transnational settings. As integral sources of food and water, local and international transportation, recreation, and aesthetic beauty, rivers have dictated where cities have risen, and in times of flooding, drought, and war, where they've fallen. Modern Western civilizations have sought to control rivers by channeling them for irrigation, raising and lowering them in canal systems, and damming them for power generation. Contributors analyze the regional, national, and international politicization of rivers, the use and treatment of waterways in urban versus rural environments, and the increasing role of international commissions in ecological and commercial legislation for the protection of river resources. Case studies include the Seine in Paris, the Mississippi, the Volga, the Rhine, and the rivers of Pittsburgh. *Rivers in History* is a broad environmental history of waterways that makes a major contribution to the study, preservation, and continued sustainability of rivers as vital lifelines of Western culture.

american technological sublime david e nye: *Documenting Aftermath* Megan Finn, 2024-07-23 An examination of how changing public information infrastructures shaped people's experience of earthquakes in Northern California in 1868, 1906, and 1989. When an earthquake happens in California today, residents may look to the United States Geological Survey for online maps that show the quake's epicenter, turn to Twitter for government bulletins and the latest news, check Facebook for updates from friends and family, and count on help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). One hundred and fifty years ago, however, FEMA and other government agencies did not exist, and information came by telegraph and newspaper. In *Documenting Aftermath*, Megan Finn explores changing public information infrastructures and how they shaped people's experience of disaster, examining postearthquake information and communication practices in three Northern California earthquakes: the 1868 Hayward Fault earthquake, the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, and the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. She then analyzes the institutions, policies, and technologies that shape today's postdisaster information landscape. Finn argues that information orders—complex constellations of institutions, technologies, and practices—influence how we act in, experience, and document events. What Finn terms event epistemologies, constituted both by historical documents and by researchers who study them, explain how information orders facilitate particular possibilities for knowledge. After the 1868 earthquake, the Chamber of Commerce telegraphed reassurances to out-of-state investors while local newspapers ran sensational earthquake narratives; in 1906, families and institutions used innovative techniques for locating people; and in 1989, government institutions and the media developed a symbiotic relationship in information dissemination. Today, government disaster response plans and new media platforms imagine different sources of informational authority yet work together shaping disaster narratives.

american technological sublime david e nye: *Digitisation* Gertraud Koch, 2017-07-14 In

recent years, digital technologies have become pervasive in academic and everyday life. This comprehensive volume covers a wide range of concepts for studying the new cultural dynamics that are evident as a result of digitisation. It considers how the cultural changes triggered by digitisation processes can be approached empirically. The chapters include carefully chosen examples and help readers from disciplines such as Anthropology, Sociology, Media Studies, and Science & Technology Studies to grasp digitisation theoretically as well as methodologically.

american technological sublime david e nye: Mass Destruction Timothy J. LeCain, 2009-06-22 The place: The steep mountains outside Salt Lake City. The time: The first decade of the twentieth century. The man: Daniel Jackling, a young metallurgical engineer. The goal: A bold new technology that could provide billions of pounds of cheap copper for a rapidly electrifying America. The result: Bingham's enormous Glory Hole, the first large-scale open-pit copper mine, an enormous chasm in the earth and one of the largest humanmade artifacts on the planet. Mass Destruction is the compelling story of Jackling and the development of open-pit hard rock mining, its role in the wiring of an electrified America, as well its devastating environmental consequences. Mass destruction mining soon spread around the nation and the globe, providing raw materials essential to the mass production and mass consumption that increasingly defined the emerging American way of life. At the dawn of the last century, Jackling's open pit replaced immense but constricted underground mines that probed nearly a mile beneath the earth, to become the ultimate symbol of the modern faith that science and technology could overcome all natural limits. A new culture of mass destruction emerged that promised nearly infinite supplies not only of copper, but also of coal, timber, fish, and other natural resources. But, what were the consequences? Timothy J. LeCain deftly analyzes how open-pit mining continues to affect the environment in its ongoing devastation of nature and commodification of the physical world. The nation's largest toxic Superfund site would be one effect, as well as other types of environmental dead zones around the globe. Yet today, as the world's population races toward American levels of resource consumption, truly viable alternatives to the technology of mass destruction have not yet emerged.

american technological sublime david e nye: The Early History of Railway Tunnels Hubert Pragnell, 2024-08-30 To the early railway traveller, the prospect of travelling to places in hours rather than days hitherto was an inviting prospect, however a journey was not without its fears as well as excitement. To some, the prospect of travelling through a tunnel without carriage lighting, with smoke permeating the compartment and the confined noise was a horror of the new age. What might happen if we broke down or crashed into another train in the darkness? To others it was exciting, with the light from the footplate flickering against the tunnel walls or spotting the occasional glimpses of light from a ventilation shaft. To the directors of early railway companies, planning a route was governed by expense and the most direct way. Avoiding hills could add miles but tunnelling through them could involve vast expense as the Great Western Railway found at Box and the London and Birmingham at Kilsby. Creating a cutting as an alternative was also costly not only in labour and time, but also in compensation for landowners, who opposed railways on visual and social grounds having seen their land divided by canals. Construction involved millions of bricks or blocks of stone for sufficiently thick walls to withstand collapse. However, the entrance barely seen from the carriage window might be an impressive Italianate arch as at Primrose Hill, or a castellated portal worthy of the Middle Ages as at Bramhope. This book sets out to tell the story of tunnelling in Britain up to about 1870, when it was a question of burrowing through earth and rock with spade and explosive powder, with the constant danger of collapse or flooding leading to injury and death. It uses contemporary accounts, from the dangers of railway travel by Dickens to the excitement of being drawn through the Liverpool Wapping Tunnel by the young composer Mendelssohn. It includes descriptions from early railway company guide books, newspapers and diaries. It also includes numerous photographs and colored architectural elevations from railway archives.

american technological sublime david e nye: Reclaiming the American West Alan Berger, 2002-10-25 Berger (design, Harvard U.) provides an overview of what possibilities are offered by

converting abandoned mines, as well as the physical, philosophical, technological, environmental, political, regulatory and ethical issues involved. In the opening chapters, he addresses the history, size, scope, and various forms of reclamation projects. Subsequent topics cover more speculative and theoretical discussions of aesthetics, space, nature, time and revaluing, together with photographic evidence. The book contains 199 color illustrations and is oversize: 11.25x9.5. Annotation copyrighted by Book News, Inc., Portland, OR

american technological sublime david e nye: Powering American Farms Richard F. Hirsh, 2022-06-14 Challenging traditional scholarship on the New Deal, the book reinterprets the history of rural electrification. It tells the previously unacknowledged story of how private power companies, with allies in land-grant universities, engendered social and technical innovations in the 1920s and early 1930s that enabled growing numbers of farmers to obtain electrical service, well before the creation of Depression-era government programs--

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