

The real world of technology

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This essay is in context to Ursula Franklin's "Real World of Technology".

Ursula Franklin is an Author, research Physicist, Metallurgist and Educator. She was born on 16th September, 1921 in Munich, Germany. She is known for this reading, The Real World of Technology, which is based on her 1989 Massey Lectures, and The Ursula Franklin Reader: Pacifism as a Map, a collection of her papers, interviews, and talks. In this reading, the Author, Franklin has named the title "The Real World of Technology" because she wants to speak out or tell the real truth about technology.

She wants spread awareness to the world regarding the ill effects of technology on humanity. If left-unchecked technology will eventually destroy society as we know it. She differentiates the use of technology in the past, what it is at present and what it will be in the future. Franklin illustrates her point by focusing on the effects technology has had on society and cultures in the past. She uses examples from China before the Common Era to the Roman Empire, with a majority of examples coming from the last one hundred and fifty years. Such as the Industrial Revolution and the invention of electronic mail.

Franklin contends that for society's sake, people must question everything before accepting new technologies into their world. In the book, Franklin's argument urges people to come together and participate in public reviews and discuss or question technological practices that lead to a world that is designed for technology and not for society. The Real World Of Technology attempts to show how society is affected by every new invention that comes onto the market and supposedly makes life more easy going and hassle free while making work more productive and profitable.

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The lectures argue that technology has built the house in which we live and that this house is continually changing and being renovated. There is very little human activity outside of the house, and all inhabitants are affected by the design of the house, by the division of its space, by the location of its doors and walls. Franklin claims that rarely does society step outside of the house to live, when compared with generations past.

The goal for leaving the house is not to enter the natural environment, because in Franklin's terms environment essentially means what is around us that constructed, manufactured, built environment that is the day-in-day-out setting of much of the contemporary world of technology. Nature today is seen as a construct instead of as a force or entity with its own dynamics. The book claims that society views nature the same way as society views infrastructure as something that is there to accommodate us, to facilitate or be part of our lives, subject to our planning.

Franklin writes in-depth about infrastructure and especially technological infrastructure. She claims that since the Industrial Revolution, corporations as well as governments using public funds have invested heavily into technological infrastructures and that: the growth and development of technology has required as a necessary prerequisite a support relationship from governments and public institutions that did not exist in earlier times.

Franklin feels that the current environmental crisis that is facing the world--polluted air and water, acid rain and global warming to name a few, are due to the infrastructures built to support technology and its divisible benefits. Because of the newfound relationship between government and the private sector and the fact that these infrastructures can't be built without the

governments of the world, the state is just as much to blame for the current condition of the environment as any polluting cooperation.

The difference between a private company and the government, Franklin insists, is that citizens surrendered some of their individual autonomy (and some of their money) to the state for the protection and advancement of the the common good - that is indivisible benefits. When governments do not attempt to stop the destruction caused by the creation of these infrastructures, the government is doing a disservice to its citizens. Just as the Industrial Revolution led to productive and holistic divisions of labor, she fears that new technologies non-communication technologies