

**Nov. 24**

1. Science, technology, and society
2. The Internet as equalizer /  
The Internet as divider
3. Interaction and identity online

# Science, technology, and Society

## What is “technology”?

- Textbook: “The application of science to solve problems in daily life.”
- Frequently used more broadly

Consider a tiny innovation commonly found in European hotels: attaching large cumbersome weights to room keys in order to remind customers that they should leave their key at the front desk every time they leave the hotel instead of taking it along on a tour of the city.

Latour, Bruno. “Technology Is Society Made Durable.”  
The Sociological Review 38, no. S1 (May 1, 1990): 103–31.



# Technology and society

**Technology *mediates* the way we live and interact in society:**



## **Weapons**

Interpersonal dominance  
Warfare, conquest, colonialism



## **Transportation**

Trade  
Migration



## **Medicine**

Personal health  
Reproduction  
Demographic change



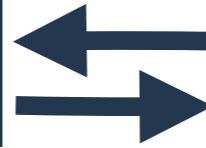
## **Automation**

Increased leisure  
Economic production

## **Communication ...**

# Science & Technology studies

Society & culture



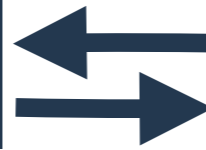
Science & technology

How does  
***technology***  
affect  
***society***?

- Is technological change *exogenous*? something that happens *to* society?  
Demographic transition theory, Weber on bureaucracy, etc.
- How can new science and technologies change the way we interact?
- How can new science and technologies alter power relations?

# Science & Technology studies

Society & culture



Science & technology

How does  
***society***  
affect  
***technology?***

- Production of scientific knowledge and technology is ***inherently social***.
- Social institutions and norms ***skew*** scientific knowledge.  
Promote 'bad' science (phrenology, conversion therapy)  
Hinder 'good' science (heliocentric astronomy, stem cells)
- Scientific knowledge is ***itself social***.  
Kuhn: paradigms and structure of scientific revolutions  
Latour: creation of a scientific fact