

The Rise and Fall of American Technology



How did America rise to global dominance in technology, and what happened since then? What feeds technological advancement and the economic growth it brings? What factors contribute to today's worrisome trends, and who is responsible? What can be done now to avoid or diminish the impact of a decline? The author draws on his forty years of experience to answer these questions in an organized and thoughtful manner. He outlines the role that technology has played in the economy of the United States and explains how theory evolves into products. Describing how technology gets developed, he explains America's rise to global dominance in technology and salutes its golden age with an overview of many breakthroughs that improved our standard of living and lifted every boat. Then, illustrating how the current decline began, he delineates the impacts this decline may have on America's future and highlights the strategies that can help us now. Very few bright ideas ever make it to the marketplace. Explaining the process by which new technologies are born and find their way into products, Dr. Gref makes ample use of historical examples that intrigue and inform the reader while illustrating the concepts presented. He contrasts the commonly-held perception that the pace of technology is accelerating with the historical record. He highlights the people and the organizations which are responsible for America's technological largesse. The book follows the money to uncover the underlying trends. The beginning of a decline in technology development is detected using indirect indicators for clues. Impacts on the formation of companies, employment and productivity provide sobering reasons to enlighten others and demand a change in course. After considering the possibilities, the book proposes several constructive actions which avoid the proverbial

tendency to throw more money at the problem. The goal of the book is to provoke discussion and promote action where appropriate. Americans standard of living is at stake. Tech-savvy readers will want to understand this issue so as to influence others. Long-range thinkers will want to factor these considerations into their prognostications. The titans of the technology-based companies can develop new and improved strategies based on the findings of this book. And, our elected officials may want to act before a catastrophic disaster confronts the nation. This book will strike a chord with everyone who is interested in Americas future economic health. Specific audience groups include scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, employees in technology based companies, government and corporate policymakers deciding the future of research and development (R&D) programs, government workers involved in the execution of government R&D programs and those thinking about a career in R&D. It is complementary to such works as Politics and Economics in America: The Way We Came to Be by Richard E. Carmichael (Krieger Publishing Company, 1998), which explores political and economic history in order to explain the emergence of the United States world economic dominance. Carmichaels book makes recommendations on how government could assist America s businesses in maintaining our economic leadership, but it does not address any aspects of technology development and associated issues. Closing the Innovation Gap by Judy Estrin (McGraw Hill, 2009), provides business leaders with concepts for leading their organizations so as to close the innovation gap with competitors. It focuses on the innovation environment within the organization, whereas Dr. Gref addresses the complete technology development cycle, its financing, Americas rise to global dominance, and the specter of a national decline.

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