

Computers and Brain Power

Technological processes will be applied to the old industrial tasks. First, the new technology follows the line of least resistance; second, the technology is used to improve previous technologies; and third, new directions or uses are discovered that grow out of technology itself. The first stage of technological innovation applies in ways that do not threaten people - reducing the chance that the technology will be abruptly rejected. The way society handled the introduction of microprocessors is a classic example of this first stage. Now, young people entering the labor force have some form of information device - from calculators to computer games to high-tech gadgets and drives. The second stage is being used to improve what we already have. Computers are improving what exists. We have ready information about anything leading to the third stage of invention and applications that are imagined now. The potential microprocessors are awesome. The automation of factories and offices, once a futuristic pipe dream, is a reality. It is now a wonder, that computers have inspired fear and mystery in workers ever since their powers were first uncovered. Finally, the transition from an industrial to an information society does not mean manufacturing will cease to exist or become unimportant. Did farming end with the industrial era? Information is as necessary to General Motors as to IBM. In an information age, the focus of manufacturing will shift from the physical to more intellectual functions on which the physical depends. Information is an economic entity because it costs something to produce and because people are willing to pay for it. Indeed, to survive in an information society, where computers and keyboards are tricks of the trade - we have to become friends with the computer and become computer literate. The whole orientation of computers is getting to expand the brainpower through growth, education, and learning the new information-electronics economy.