

Chapter 19: Technological Advances and Economics in the Global Age: 19-1d Information Technology

Book Title: The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History 7th Edition Update, AP® Edition

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## 19-1d Information Technology

Nuclear energy, jet engines, radar, and tape recording were among the many World War II developments that later had an impact on consumers' lives. New technology increased industrial productivity, reduced labor requirements, and improved the flow of information that made markets more efficient. The consumer electronics industry rapidly developed new products, changes seen in the music industry's movement from vinyl records to eight-track tapes, CDs, and then MP3 and other digital delivery technologies. Computers became faster, smaller, and less expensive, cell phones were transformed into smartphones, and the speed of news and data transmission accelerated at an unanticipated rate, transforming business, education, and politics globally.

### AP® Exam Tip

Understand the effects of new technologies like the internet and cellular communication on the process of globalization.

Improvements in existing technologies accounted for much of the developed world's productivity increases during the 1950s and 1960s, as faster, more efficient transportation and communication cut costs and expanded markets. But new technologies were important as well. Governments bore much of the cost of developing and constructing nuclear power plants and sponsored research into new technologies. None has proved more influential in the last four decades than the computer, which has transformed both work and leisure (see Environment & Technology: Connected in [Chapter 20](#)). The first computers were expensive, large, and slow, and only corporations, governments, and universities could afford them. Each new iteration of computer technology has been smaller, faster, and less expensive. As a result, the serial utilization of desktops, laptops, tablets, and smartphones transformed commerce, education, and government. Today the computational capacity of a 1970s university mainframe computer can be found on the smartphone or tablet of individual university students. The modern smartphone may prove to be the most revolutionary innovation in this ongoing transformation and integration of communication, computation, research, and entertainment.

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