



# Andrew Feenberg

Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of Technology  
Simon Fraser University, Vancouver

“I grew up in an environment where science was considered the most important cultural achievement, but of course not the only one.”

## Research Themes

- Online Education
- Online Community
- Human Value in Computer Networks
- Philosophy of Technology
- Social Factors in Computer Mediated Communication

## Biography

- Born in New York City in 1943
- His father was a nuclear physicist
- One of the six philosophers discussed in Hans Achterhuis, ed. *American Philosophy of Technology*
- Early innovator in the field of online communication

## Education

Ph.D. in Philosophy from UC San Diego (1973)  
M.A. in Philosophy from UC San Diego (1967)  
B.A. in Philosophy from John Hopkins University (1965)

## Career

2003 – Present	Simon Fraser University	Canada Research Chair
1969 – 2003	San Diego State University	Professor
1968 – 1969	SUNY at Buffalo, UC San Diego, UC Irvine, Universite de Paris-Daupine, University of Oslo, University of Paris, University of Tokyo, Harvey Mudd College, University of Santa Clara, Ecole Normale de Lyon	Visiting Professor

## Publications

### Critical Theory of Technology (1991)

Feenberg argues that the roots of the degradation of labor, education, and the environment lie not in technology per se but in the cultural values embodied in its design. He also calls for broader democratic participation in technological choices.

### Technology and the Politics of Knowledge (1995)

### Alternative Modernity: The Technical Turn in Philosophy and Social Theory (1995)

Feenberg argues that current technical methods or standards were once called values and translated into the “technical codes” we take for granted today. This argument is substantiated in a series of case studies including exploration of science fiction and film, AIDS research, the French experience with the “information superhighway,” and the Japanese reception of Western values.

**Questioning Technology (1999)**

Feenberg argues that technological design is central to the social and political structure of modern societies.

**Transforming Technology (2002)****Modernity and Technology (2003)**

Feenberg examines the co-construction of technology and modernity.

**Community in the Digital Age (2004)****Between Reason and Experience: Essays in Technology and Modernity (2010)**

This book revises his idea of “democratic rationalization”, develops implications for environmentalism, and explains the relation between technology and modernity. He presents two cultural studies, the French reception of videotex and the Japanese struggle to embrace modernity.

**(Re)Inventing the Internet: Critical Case Studies (2011)**

This book refers to Internet in a society that tends to reduce its members to passive spectators. Those case studies covers a range of phenomena including computer gaming cultures, online education, surveillance, and the mutual shaping of digital technologies and civic life.

**Related Figures****Sherry Turkle**

- Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Professor, Social Studies of Science and Technology, MIT
- One of the Contributors to the book *Community in the Digital Age* by Andrew Feenberg and Darin Barney, published in 2004
- Cited Sherry Turkle’s works in this book:
  - *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* (1984)
  - *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (1995)
  - *Psychoanalytic Politics* (1990)

**Herbert Marcuse**

- The Father of the “New Left”
- German Jewish philosopher, sociologist and political theorist
- Technological rationality
- Feenberg is also co-editor of *Marcuse: Critical Theory and the Promise of Utopia* (1987)

**References**

- Critical Theory of Technology, Andrew Feenberg, Oxford University Press, 1991.  
 Second Edition, Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Alternative Modernity: The Technical Turn in Philosophy and Social Theory, Andrew Feenberg, University of California Press, 1995.
- Questioning Technology, Andrew Feenberg, Routledge, 1999.
- Modernity and Technology, Andrew Feenberg, Tom Misa and Philip Breij, MIT Press, 2003.
- (Re)Inventing the Internet: Critical Case Studies, Andrew Feenberg and Norm Friesen, Sense Publishers, 2011.
- Critical Theory of Technology, Andrew Feenberg, [www.sfu.ca/~andrewf](http://www.sfu.ca/~andrewf).  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew\\_Feenberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Feenberg)