



The Labyrinth of Technology: A Preventive Technology and Economic Strategy as a Way Out

Willem H. Vanderburg

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Why does modern technology succeed so brilliantly in some respects and simultaneously fail in others? While he was completing a doctoral thesis in mechanical engineering in the late 60s and early 70s, Willem Vanderburg became convinced that the environmental crisis and the possible limits to growth would require a fundamental change in the engineering, management and regulation of technology.

In this volume he exposes the limitations of conventional approaches in these fields. Modern societies urgently need to rethink the intellectual division of labour in science and technology and the corresponding organization of the university, corporation, and government in order to get out of a self-destructive pattern where problems are first created by some than then dealt with by others, making it almost impossible to get to the roots of anything. The result is what he calls the labyrinth of technology, a growing patchwork of compensations that merely displace and transform problems from one place to another. The author's diagnosis suggests the remedy: a new, preventive strategy that situates technological and economic growth in its human, societal, and biospheric contexts, and calls for a synthesis of methods in engineering, management, and public policy, and of approaches in the social sciences and humanities. He also suggests that this same synthesis can be applied in medicine, law, social work, and other professions.

The Labyrinth of Technology is a unique and invaluable text for students, academics and laypersons in all disciplines, and speaks to those who are torn between the benefits that modern technology provides and the difficulties it creates in our individual and collective lives.



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