Phenomenology of Technology
Heidegger - Borgmann - Ihde
Heidegger

Technology is not an aggregate of technological things, but a destined way of being-in-the-world, that reveals the meaningfulness of the world in a particular ordered way. This ordered way of thinking is the chief danger to our humanity. We must discover how to find a free relationship to technology.
Heidegger

1) Technology refers to a particular way of being-in-the-world that *Enframes* the world as *standing-reserve.*

2) *Standing-reserve* interprets the word as ready for consumption or ready for use in the service of consumption.

3) Today we are *destined* to this technological way of being as the primary way through which the world is revealed.

4) We can only recover our human being-ness in this world when we find those practices that *gather* us rather than control us. But what is this gathering?
1) There are two paradigmatic ways in which we engage the object-pole of technologies: as **things** and as **devices**.

2) **Things** are inseparable from their context, provide a focus for a practice, see means as virtuous skills, disclose a meaningful world of human engagement.

3) **Devices** provide a commodity to relieve a burden, lack context, separates means from ends, conceal their machinery, and don’t invoke engagement.
1) Often focal things are **simple**, but focal practices that surround them are **complex** and of real importance.

2) Focal practices arise out of **tradition**, invoke the development of discipline and **skill**, and above all focus human **engagement** through **ritual**.

3) Focal practices **gather** humans and the world and humans with each other.
Thinking with Borgman

Description of a Hearth

The Linguistic Meanings of focus

The experience of a meal

“The more strongly we sense and the more clearly we understand the coherence and the character of technology, the more evident it becomes to us that technology must be countered by and equally patterned and social commitment, that is, a practice.”
Phenomenology of Technics

Don Ihde
Technics Embodied

QUESTION
What are the various ways in which I-as-body interact with my environment by means of technologies?

METHOD AND GOAL
The task of a phenomenology of human-technology relations is to discover the various structural features of those ambiguous relations.
Phenomenology of Seeing

I see - through the optical artifact - the world

versus

I see - the world

versus

(I-glasses) - world
Technology as Mediator

• I take a technology into my experiencing in a particular way by perceiving through the technology.

• Technology is in a position of mediation.

• The technology withdraws upon embodiment.
extendable and/or reducible
Technology as Extension

I - car - world
versus
(l-car) - world
versus
I - (car - world)

• The technology extends my embodied awareness to the parameters of the car.
• One’s body “image” is not fixed but malleable - extendable or reducible
Transparency or Power?

Which technologies approach transparency?
Which technologies satisfy through power?

These desires seem contradictory - I want the transformation and I don’t want to be aware of it.
Magnification - Reduction

(I-telephone) - you

The phenomenal presence is that of a voice
Analogous to the near-distance in a telescope

The screen - what reveals is what excites

What is being seen changes, but how it is “seen”
does not - my body is still the reference.
Hermeneutic Technics

A special interpretive action - analogous to the reading process - within a technological context.

EXAMPLE: WRITING

Writing is technologically mediated language.
Isomorphic Representation

Marco, Big Marco River, Florida

- Thu 02-07:
  - 4:52 AM: -0.8ft
  - 12:00 PM: 1.7ft
  - 4:46 PM: 0.7ft

- Fri 02-08:
  - 10:46 PM: 2.3ft
  - 5:42 AM: 0.3ft

www.localtides.net
Hermeneutic Transparency

Reading is a sedimented acquisition of the literate lifeworld.

What is referred to is referred by the text and is referred to through the text.

What now presents itself as the “world” of the text.

It takes place through reading, and it takes its shape in the interpretive context of my language abilities.
Referential Seeing

When you read the thermometer, you *hermeneutically* know it is warm, immediately. *Perceptually* you are simply looking at numbers on an instrument, or at a sunny day in May.
Referential Seeing

I - technology - world versus I - (technology - world)
Interpretation and Perception

Readable technologies call for the extension of my hermeneutic and “linguistic” capacities through the instruments, while the reading itself retains the bodily perceptual location as a relation with and towards the technology.
Summary of Technological Intentionalities

General intentionality relations
Human - technology - world

Variant A: Embodiment Technologies
(I - technology) --> World

Variant B: Hermeneutic Technologies
I --> (technology-World)
Intentionalities of Technology Experiences

Variant A: Embodiment Technologies
(I - technology) --> World

These work best when there is transparency and an isomorphism between perceptual and bodily action within the relation.

Some are analogue technologies
Microscope and Telescope
Intentionalities of Technology Experiences

Through hermeneutic relations we can, as it were, *read* ourselves into any possible situation without being there. In science, as opposed to literature, what is important is that the reading retain *some* kind of reference or hermeneutic transparency to what is there.

Use Ihde’s concepts to articulate the difference between:

- reading ourselves into the world of a movie
- reading ourselves into the world of a book
Intentionalities of Music

How might Ihde’s concepts be used to describe a musician playing music:

What changes from
an acapella voice piece
to
an violin piece
to
an electronica piece

“Instrumental music tends to go in one of two directions: either embodied or hermeneutic.”
Technologies of Music: Acapella to Effects

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTlSka5iqPY
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZ7DZ7HPXck
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Owg2x3zYf8w
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LPQABI3xHA
Alterity Relations to Technologies

A relation *to* or *with* a technology that presents itself positively as *other*.

How is that technologies can become quasi-other?

1) Anthropomorphism - personalization of artifacts

2) Spirited animation - the horse and sports care

3) Fascination - the spinning top or automoton

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JB0KDLpVPFk
Three Stages of Technologies

Toy - Embodied

Mirror - Hermeneutic

Art - Aterity
Intentional Structure

Alterity Relations
I - technology (-world)
Intentional Structure

Background Relations
I - (technology) -world