

For immediate release  
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## A CANADIAN INTELLECTUAL EPIC

**Toronto** - Why has Canadian intellectual thought been such a domineering force in the areas of communications and technology? George Sidney Brett, Sandford Fleming, Thomas Keefer, Stephen Leacock, Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, George Grant, Northrop Frye, Dennis Lee, Ursula Franklin, Mark Kingwell, Derrick de Kerckhove, Heather Menzies—all have had, or still have, a powerful influence on the international discourse about modernity and the impact of technological change.

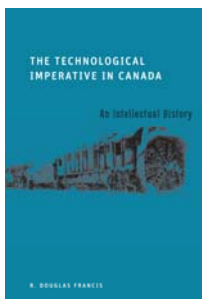
In his wide-ranging and brilliant book, *The Technological Imperative in Canada: An Intellectual History*, Douglas R. Francis examines the ideas of Anglo-Canadian theorists from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. He argues that Canadian thought on technology is particularly compelling because its foundations are drawn from a heated and long-lasting intellectual debate about concepts of morality, technology, and national identity. In the 19th century, industrialization, communications, and transportation technologies profoundly changed the existing social landscape, while promising untold benefits for the future. Advocates of technology argued that technology was a moral force that would strengthen Canada's link to Britain and 'Western Civilization', while opponents of technology saw it as a source of moral decay, one that would allow American power to threaten Canadian independence.

Optimism about technological progress reigned through to the 20th century but abruptly turned to horror as the atrocities of the Great War mounted. The massive expansion of communication and other electronic technologies following the end of WWII brought the spectre of American cultural and economic dominance into full view, prompting a radical turn in thought as articulated by George Grant, Marshall McLuhan, and others.

The tension between the moral imperative versus technological imperative continues, interwoven now with a wide range of influences, including feminism and environmentalism. Francis's narrative charts a fascinating intellectual journey, one that is at once both uniquely Canadian and international in scope.

**R. Douglas Francis** is a professor of Canadian history at the University of Calgary. *The Technological Imperative in Canada* was shortlisted for the 2010 Sir John A. Macdonald Prize awarded by the Canadian Historical Association.

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For more information, to book an interview with the author, or obtain a review copy of [\*\*\*The Technological Imperative in Canada: An Intellectual History\*\*\*](#), R. Douglas Francis, (UBC Press), please contact: Kerry Kilmartin at 604.822.8244 or [kilmartin@ubcpres.ca](mailto:kilmartin@ubcpres.ca)

