

Legal Histories of Technology

Organizer

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Description

Legal histories of technology provide an important source for finding our bearings in modern socio-technical policy issues. From failed bills to Constitutional interpretation, from punishments for technology crimes to committee constructions of intellectual property rights, from jury instructions for technical accidents to floor debates hinging on technological analogies, from court cases commenting on international data disputes to public comments on national telecommunication regulations, the law continues to support our understanding of people and rules in relation to technology. International analysis can be particularly insightful, because it highlights the variation and consistency in certain social relationships with and responses to technological changes. Legal histories of technology are part of a growing interest in the governance of technology across STS communities and increasingly utilized to inform current debates around the world. The proposed panel organizes a series of commentaries on law and policy aspects of the history of technology, associated sources, and methods, and is particularly interested in comparative and international research that highlights cultural differences surrounding technology through legal representations. All areas of law (e.g., jurisdiction, criminal, civil, legislative, regulatory, intellectual property, privacy, antitrust, etc.) are welcome, as are all subject specialties (e.g., biomedical, environmental, communication and computing, transportation law etc.).

Topics may include but are not limited to:

- Technology law making: utilization agency rulemaking materials and public comments, legislative history and floor debates, and executive orders and policy statements.
- Technology civil or criminal cases: conflicting and shifting judicial decisions, jury instructions and rewards, and liability structures.
- Technology crimes, prohibitions, and circumvention: moratoriums, fines, sentencing guidelines and sentences, harms and deterrence, legal circumvention through technological means.
- International technology comparisons: comparative policy approaches to technological integration.
- Commentary on the practices and limitations of historicizing new technologies for modern policy efforts.