Turning Away from Technology: A New Vision for the 21st Century
Stephanie Mills, editor
San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1997. xxxi, 256 pp.

Reviewed by David W. Gill   www.ethixbiz.com

Stephanie Mills, Michigan-based ecological activist and author, did a magnificent job turning a 750-page transcript of 40 hours of discussion into this 250-page book. The forty hours was spread over a 1993 event in San Francisco on "Megatechnology and Development" and a 1994 sequel in Devon (UK) on "Megatechnology and Economic Globalization." Perhaps 15 of the 46 invited participants were at both conferences.

Inevitably, such discussions (and the books that result) have an eclectic, rambling character. Breadth wins over depth. The value of this book is mainly in giving outsiders a generous sampling of a certain kind of technology criticism. The participants included two or three formidable intellectuals (e.g., Langdon Winner), some important prophets (e.g., Wendell Berry, Kirkpatrick Sale, Jeremy Rifkin), filmmaker Godfrey Reggio, ecofeminist Maria Mies, and a variety of other activists, thinkers, farmers, and eccentric (e.g., Ralph Metzner: "From psychedelics my interests have changed to sacred plants and their uses in shamanism..." p. 132) from around the world.

While there are some flashes of insight and the concluding list of "78 reasonable questions to ask about any technology" is pretty good, the book as a whole is disappointing. Too often the "discussion" careens between rants against television, global business, Western civilization, Modernity, and males---and self-congratulatory testimonies to one's virtuously alternative, New Age lifestyle. What the enemy is---or the alternative---is never very clear. This sort of discussion makes its participants feel better, but communicates far too much ignorance and arrogance to those not already insiders in the club.

Delivering on a technology-enabled closed-loop instructional system â€" one that will help close the 21st-century skills gap â€" will ultimately require effective collaborations among a complex and interconnected group of policy-makers, educators, education technology providers and funders. When implemented thoughtfully, these collaborations can begin to bring the most effective education technologies to more of the worldâ€™s students in an effort to address 21st-century skills gaps. Chapter 1: The skills needed in the 21st century. To thrive in todayâ€™s innovation-driven economy, workers need a diff The 21st century has seen an impressive explosion of equally controversial and impactful inventions. Even more so, this century has seen the reemergence and refinement of technology found in previous decades. Â Thankfully the world did not end at the turn of the century, but the 19 years following would go on to be crucial. What is even more interesting about this time period is the fact that the inventions from previous decades finally took off in the 21st century. Over the months, we have explored crucial inventions from each decade that would eventually go on to change the world and our lives. As you probably guessed, today we are going to continue that tradition and take a brief look at some of the inventions from the 21st century. Turning Away from Technology book. Read reviews from worldâ€™s largest community for readers. What is the real impact of technology on our cultural and pol...Â Fifty visionary environmentalists, scientists, scholars, and social critics grapple with these questions and expose the links between the What is the real impact of technology on our cultural and political lives? Are the proponents of megatechnology and the global economy correct to assume that there will always be newer technological solutions to all the world's problems? Fifty visionary environmentalists, scientists, scholars, and social critics grapple with these questions and expose the links between the character of megatechnology and the social and ecological crises of our time.