

*Science, Technology, and the Constitution*

September 1987

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**SCIENCE  
TECHNOLOGY  
AND THE  
CONSTITUTION**

**BACKGROUND PAPER**



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## Foreword

In honor of the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution, OTA has undertaken a study of *Science, Technology, and the Constitution in an Information Age*. The project was requested by the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and its Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties, and the Administration of Justice.

Science and technology have, throughout our history, been major factors in shaping American society and our way of life. By changing the ways in which we interact with one another, science and technology often affect the way in which we define the general welfare, the way in which we view the realm of government, and the nature of the rights we exercise as American citizens. As we enter our third century of constitutional history, several areas of technology are undergoing rapid development and promise to have especially profound effects; microelectronics, biology, and chemistry, for example, are transforming the practice of medicine, criminal justice, newsgathering, and other social activities and institutions.

This background paper summarizes and discusses major themes that are being explored in the project on *Science, Technology, and the Constitution*. Several special reports on these themes are scheduled for release later this year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John H. Gibbons". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "J" and "G".

JOHN H. GIBBONS  
*Director*

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NOTE: OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the reviewers. The reviewers do not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

# Science, Technology, and the Constitution

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