



TEKNOLOGI-RÅDET
THE DANISH BOARD OF TECHNOLOGY



Technology
with a
human face

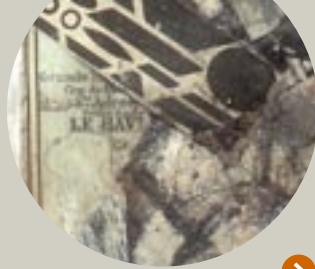


Who is the Danish Board of Technology?

Teknologirådet, The Danish Board of Technology, is an independent institution set up by law by the Danish Parliament – Folketinget – in 1995 as a replacement for the previous board, Teknologinævnet that had been set up in 1986. The Board receives an annual subsidy in the budget. The Ministry for Science, Technology and Development is the monitoring authority for the Board and the Board makes an annual report to Parliament's Committee for Science and Technology.

The Board of Technology's Board of Governors consists of 11 members. The Government Minister appoints the Chairman and three of the members while the others are appointed upon the recommendation of a number of organisations. The Board of Representatives is made up of 50 members from a broad cross-section of Danish organisations, authorities and unions. The Secretariat implements and organises the Board of Technology's activities.





What is technology?

Technology consists basically of tools, methods and their interplay with people and society. We have come a long way with technological development since we invented the wheel and rubbed flints and wood together to make fire. Today, advanced technology features in almost every aspect of a human's life. From artificial insemination to cruise missiles. From mobile telephones to vitamin-enriched food. From industrialised pig production to environmentally friendly fuel manufactured from biomass. We are constantly creating new products and new ways of using things through research and development in the area of information and communication technology, nanotechnology, genetically modified plants, medicines, energy supply and much more. The interplay between technology and humans influences the whole structure of society – the way we work, traffic conditions, the shape of buildings, our view of humanity ...



Technology raises important questions for which there are no clear-cut answers. In Denmark, we have a desire to develop society democratically in an economic, ecological and socially sustainable way. The technology we develop and use has to be tailored to achieving this goal. People shape technology – and people can set limits on the use of technology so that it will solve more problems than it creates.



Why a Board of Technology?

The Board of Technology was brought into existence to help spread knowledge about the possibilities of technology and its consequences for the individual, society and for the environment. The Board of Technology aims to promote debate and inform the public about technology and advise Parliament and the government on technological questions.

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Knowledge and debate about technology is necessary at all levels to promote its development in a democratic manner. Therefore, the Board of Technology sees it as its duty to involve and help build bridges between citizens, politicians and experts in the assessment of technology. As an independent institution, the Board is duty bound to involve all parties concerned – businesses, research, interest organisations, a wide range of public and political decision-makers – in the assessment and debate on technology.



What are the tasks of the Board of Technology?

➤ Advice to the government and Parliament

The Board of Technology communicates and co-operates directly with the relevant parliamentary committees who can seek advice on examining a specific subject and carrying out a technological assessment. This advice can consist of answering specific questions from members of parliament, arranging hearings for parliamentary committees on current technological problems where it is necessary to include the politicians' views, or focussing on a technological dilemma in their newsletter 'From Board to Parliament'.

The Board of Technology also works with other public decision-makers on assessment of technology if the task in question lies within their remit. Partners in co-operation can be, for example, an administration or the political committee of a local council.

➤ Technological assessment, information and debate

Every year, the Board of Technology gets involved with a series of projects. The Board of Governors decides which ones to work on after collecting in ideas from anyone wishing to contribute. Members of parliament, authorities, organisations, businesses and individuals can all submit their own ideas which can be sent through the Board's website.

Among the 100–200 suggestions the Board receives, 5–10 of these are selected for further technological assessment projects. Others become articles in the newsletter 'From Board to Parliament'. When the Board of Governors chooses





subjects they put a lot of emphasis on highlighting the interplay between people, technology and society and ensuring that it is relevant to as many people as possible.

For the projects, methods are chosen which will provide the best possible solution to the problem in hand. This can be an expert appraisal where an inter-disciplinary workgroup is put together to work on a report, or it can be deciding on those methods that involve ordinary citizens or involved parties in an assessment of technology. The Board is well known for its methods of involvement, for example, consensus conferences or scenario workshops. Assessment of technology, which creates dialogue between citizens, experts, interested parties and decision-makers, can be important for producing sustainable solutions.

The Board of Technology tries, through debate and information, to find the middle ground between an unfounded fear of and an uncritical fascination with technology. The Board of Technology publishes the periodical 'Technology Debate' and subsidises debate activities on the subject areas on which it works itself.

Internationally

Technological development is active across borders and technological assessment is also carried out internationally. The Danish Board of Technology follows international debate on technology and participates in international projects in which the Board is strong in developing methods of technological assessment. One way in which this happens is through the organisation, the European Parliamentary Technology Assessment Network (EPTA).

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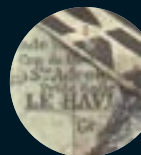
You can read all about the Board of Technology's previous and current projects on www.tekno.dk. You can also read about methods used by the Board, print reports, newsletters, information leaflets and other material or order it online. If you have any questions you are always welcome to contact staff at the Board of Technology.

The Danish Board of
Technology is to:

further discussions
about technology

assess possibilities and
threats of the technology

give advice to the Danish
Parliament and Government



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