

CHAPTER 26 Section 3 (pages 860–865)

Technology and Modern Life

BEFORE YOU READ

In the last section, you saw how the American economy changed in the 1990s.

In this section, you will learn how technology has changed Americans' lives.

AS YOU READ

Use the chart below to take notes on the technological changes described in this section and how these changes have affected your life.

TERMS AND NAMES

information superhighway Popular name for a proposed computer network

Internet Worldwide computer network

e-mail Electronic notes and messages

Telecommunications Act Controversial law to reform the communications industry

magnetic resonance imaging New method of seeing inside the human body

genetic engineering Method of changing the genes of living cells

CHANGES	EFFECTS
<i>Information superhighway</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Internet</i> • <i>e-mail</i>

Technology and Communications (pages 860–862)

How have new technologies affected communications?

President Clinton wanted to create an **information superhighway**. This was a computer *network* that linked people from around the world. The network would link cable, phone, and computer systems to provide entertainment and information.

Clinton appointed Vice-President Gore to over-

see the government's role in creating the information superhighway. They wanted private *entrepreneurs* to build the network. But they believed the government should protect people's rights to use it.

Most people took part in the information superhighway through the **Internet**, a worldwide computer network. By 1996, experts expected that 24 million Americans regularly used the Internet to send **e-mail**—electronic notes and messages.

New technologies let many Americans work in their homes instead of going to an office every day.

They also gave Americans many entertainment options. Cable television gave people more television channels. The Internet has provided people with new video games.

The changes in communications caused the growth of many communications companies. Congress passed the **Telecommunications Act** in 1996 to make sure people get good service. The law allowed telephone and cable companies to enter each others' industries. One of the results of the law was an increase in *mergers*. This cut the number of competing companies.

Congress passed the Communications Decency Act as part of the Telecommunications Act. Congress called for a “V-chip” to be placed in television sets. This computer chip would allow parents to block TV programs that they do not want their children to see.

The communications industry liked the Telecommunications Act. But some people believed that the law allowed a small number of people to control the media. Civil rights activists thought the Communications Decency Act limited free speech.

1. How did the Internet and cable television affect Americans?

Technology Enriches Lives

(pages 862–864)

How does technology affect daily life?

Technology changed many other areas of life, too. New treatments and new ways of diagnosing—discovering—illnesses were developed in the 1990s.

Doctors found better ways of tracking the spread of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, in the body. **Magnetic resonance imaging** (MRI) helped doctors get a better view of the inside of the body.

Some advances caused controversy. One of these advances was **genetic engineering**—the artificial changing of the cells of a living thing. This procedure was used to *alter* some foods. Many people feared the changes in these foods. They also feared that these foods would create *allergic* reactions in people who ate them.

New technologies offered people new types of entertainment. CD-ROM (Compact Disk Read-Only Memory) technology improved communication and research.

A single CD-ROM had enough memory to hold all the information in two encyclopedias. CD-ROMs also gave people a great way to play video games on their computers.

Technology affected other areas of life, too. Computers were placed in more classrooms across the country. Improved air bags made cars safer.

The space program also made progress. In 1993, American astronauts repaired the Hubble Space Telescope. This telescope provided scientists with great views of the universe.

2. What were some important technological advances in the United States?

Progress on the Environment

(pages 864–865)

How can technology protect the environment?

Some new technologies helped the environment. The most popular way of protecting the environment was through recycling. This helped to reduce waste in the country.

Automakers developed an electric car to reduce air pollution. Also, researchers looked for cleaner sources of energy. They tried to find energy sources—such as nuclear, wind, and solar power—to take the place of coal, gas, and oil.

3. What was the most widespread way in which Americans protected the environment?

Chapter 26: The United States in Today's World (pages 844–875)

Section 3: Technology and Modern Life (pages 860–865)

1. More and more people began to use the Internet. Often they used it to send e-mail. Cable television gave people more channels to watch.
2. Possible responses: MRIs, CD-ROMs, and genetic engineering were important technological advances in the United States.
3. recycling