

Lecture Announcement

⊕ **Organizer:** IEEE Engineering & Human Environment Society

⊕ **Title:** *Engineering Practice in the Labyrinth of Technology*

⊕ **Speaker:**

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⊕ **Abstract:**

The engineering, management and regulation of modern technology and the economic growth based on it involves countless specialists making decisions, the consequences of which fall mostly beyond their domain of expertise, with the result that any unacceptable or illegal ones must be dealt with by others in whose domain of competence they fall. As a result, the "system" first produces problems and then mitigates them by adding devices and services to the "system" without ever getting to the root of any problem. Some economists have shown that, for four decades or more, the costs incurred in the production of wealth have been rising more rapidly than gross wealth production, resulting in a steady decline of net wealth production. In other words, the "system" feeds on its own problems, has an extremely poor "signal-to-noise ratio" of desired to undesired effects, and has trapped us in a labyrinth of technology which, as a society, we appear to be unable to confront.

This diagnosis can be turned into a prescription. There are no technological or economic reasons why billions of dollars of harm to human life, society and the biosphere cannot be prevented while, at the same time and because of such prevention, the competitiveness of our economies could be vastly improved. Three nations and a group of companies have subscribed to a "factor ten" policy of doing everything we do now in terms of the services rendered by the economy with one-tenth of the consumption of materials and energy. Just imagine what this would do for a corporation and the Canadian economy! I will report on some of the work we have been doing on preventive engineering as the most important contribution our profession could make to turning the above situation around and assuring a humane and sustainable future.

⊕ **Time and Location:**

Thursday October 18, 2001. at 6.30 PM

University of Toronto

Room #GB449 located in the Galbraith Building,

35 St. George Street, Toronto.

Light refreshment will be served.

Presentation will start at 7 PM

Send comments to tor.sect@tor.ieee.org