

9 Conversions: Sound and Sight, Military and Civilian

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Abstract

Scholars in science and technology studies (STS) have long noted scientists' tendency of converting data into visual representations. This article provides an overview of the use of visualization and sonification in different fields of STS. Conversion to the visual provided a hook to mutually implicate vision and science as hallmarks of modernity. Visual representations became raw materials for art historical analyses of science and histories of objectivity. Sonification has found favor even among scientists whose work is primarily visual. In microelectronics, acoustic microscopy has been successfully applied to nondestructive inspection of integrated circuits. The final phase of acoustic microscopy took place in a postreconversion environment where engineers no longer faced such criticisms for doing basic research. Although successfully employed in some fields of physical sciences, such applications have not yet fully found their use in the field of life sciences.

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