

DRAFT

YUKON DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

INFORMATION RESOURCES

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Building the Future

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Information Resources Strategy

A Progress Report ■ April, 1987

This progress report updates recent work on an information resources strategy for the territory. It includes proposed objectives and directions which will guide the development and use of science and technology.

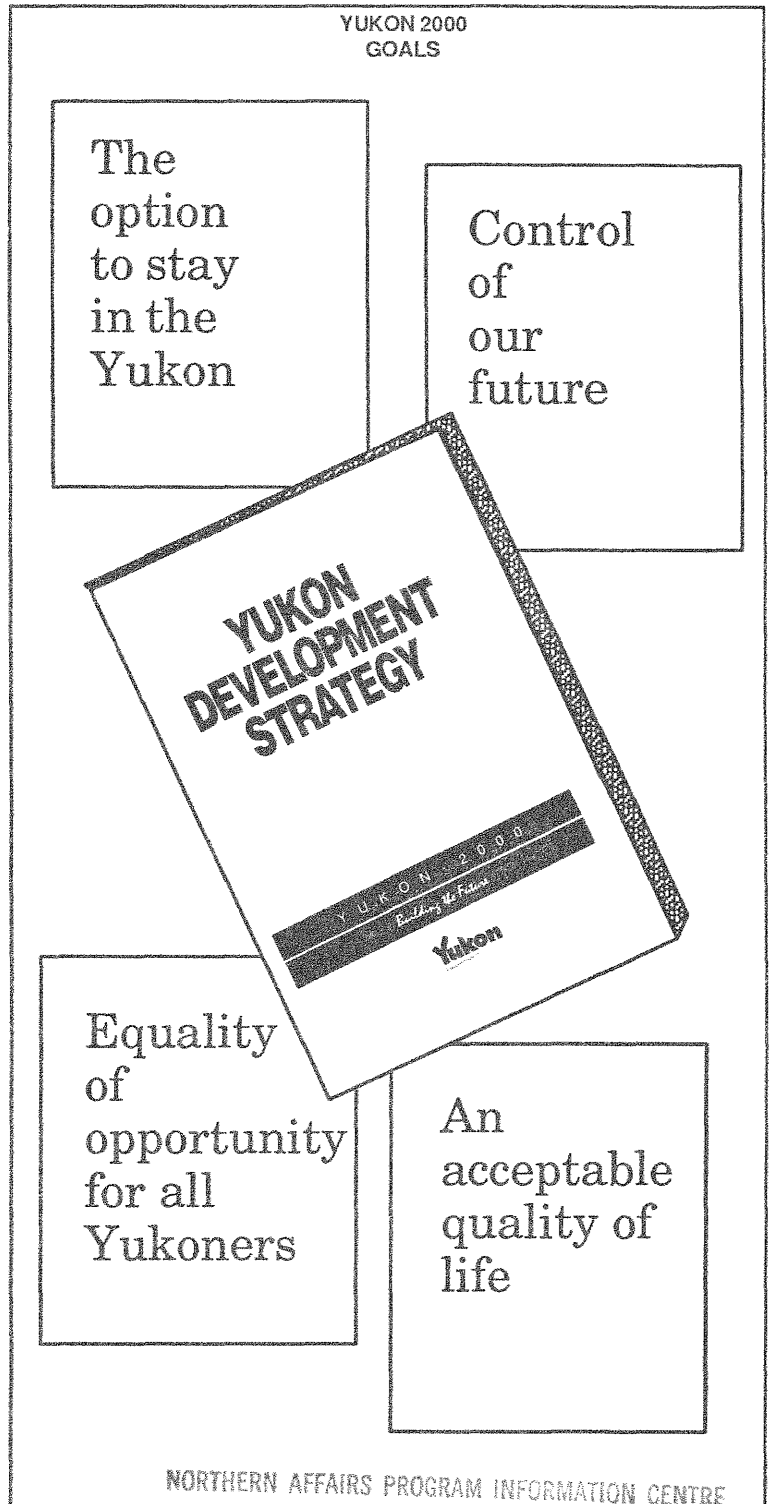
Science is a way of looking at the world to understand how the physical universe and social systems work. Technology uses science for human purposes and to meet human needs.

Research is a formal method of studying to advance science and technology. Innovation, on the other hand, is an activity that develops technology and spans steps such as research, development, design, testing and marketing. With these terms in mind, we can look at science and technology in the Yukon.

The Yukon is a small, resource-dependent society, distant from the centres of population and political and economic power. This does not mean the Yukon is isolated from the effects of scientific and technological change. On the contrary, the Yukon is greatly affected by these changes.

By understanding how change is brought about, how it can be applied to industry and society, and how it can impact the environment, we will be better able to choose for ourselves the directions we want our society to take. By developing our own mechanisms and institutions, we will more readily ensure our choices work.

A science and technology strategy should take a wide view of the possible impacts on the Yukon and its people, using knowledge and experience from many fields of study to help us achieve the future we want.



Objectives

1. To resolve social issues by using science and technology.

Technological progress has been popularly associated with the development of fairer, more democratic societies.

Social, economic and medical sciences help people and groups with problems, both by convincing governments of the need for specific actions and in demonstrating to the people involved, ways to help themselves.

2. To better understand the natural environment.

Science and technology develop knowledge and understanding of the natural environment of the Yukon. This is essential for a wide variety of economic and social activities.

3. To expand resource industries.

The Yukon is fortunate to have a mix of small and large scale enterprises and industries which use technology. Our resource industries, though, display significant potential for improvement through application of science and technology. The key to industry expansion is to find spin-off industries related to core economic activities.

4. To reinforce traditional and rural lifestyles by using existing knowledge.

Indian people have made sophisticated use of limited materials and have highly skilled traditional technologies. These maintain valued cultural and environmental relationships.

Modern technological society has generally been destructive of traditional and rural ways of life. It's no wonder since science and technology resources have generally been controlled by the urban industrial centres. But modern technology can be a positive force if used well. Voice, data and video communications will help people take specialized training in their own communities rather than only in Whitehorse.

Science can help in creating industries such as fur processing, ranching game animals and doing research on the carrying capacity of fished, trapped and hunted species.

5. To promote entrepreneurship.
Small companies tend to be more technologically progressive and create more employment opportunities per dollar of investment cost. Technology-intensive ventures in the provision of goods and services are options for local development. Most will deal with adapting technology to particular uses rather than developing new technologies.

6. To improve public infrastructure.
Transportation, communications, housing, heating, energy and sewage are areas affecting many jobs and millions of our tax dollars as well as our safety and comfort. Existing technologies need to be distributed more effectively to people in all these areas. Cooperative projects with other Northern communities can benefit Yukoners.

7. To develop original northern research.
There is a heavy emphasis on adaptive technology in the North. This must be balanced with some component of less directed research. The Yukon has many features -- its climate, geography, peoples -- which can give us competitive advantages in world science to this region.



Directions

1. The government should coordinate, develop, and promote science and technology.
The government should marshal resources to ensure science and technology are considered at all times in policy development and execution.

2. Mechanisms should be found to handle information on market data, technical experts and ongoing scientific research in specific areas.

These sorts of mechanisms should be more than a library or catalogue of data. They should be interactive, allowing people in other areas to contribute to the innovative process from afar.

3. Core facilities with meeting rooms, information resources, and some research and

development space and equipment should be acquired by government.

Such a facility like this could start small and be built as the demand for its services expands and increases in volume.

4. Entrepreneurs should get support taking new technology, or improving on old technology, and applying it to the manufacture and marketing of innovations.

Support in this area includes venture capital finances, training in management, and expert or technical services. The vehicle for delivery could range from a community or industry cooperative to a private firm or individual.

5. Science and technology training should be expanded and made more appropriate to the Yukon situation.

This would involve training adults here to form businesses pursuing opportunities arising from technological innovation.

In addition, to help promote science and technology, a public awareness campaign could be undertaken which explains science and technology and ways to tap into its benefits.

6. Technology and management ambassadors, people who promote science and technology, should be used to help others see the opportunities arising from technology.

These ambassadors would work to show Yukoners how science and technology can improve our businesses, farms, fishing, trapping, or whatever.



Conclusion

This strategy stresses both private and public participation in science and technology.

The role of the government is to facilitate entrepreneurship, innovation and independence. Our role as ordinary citizens is to take the initiative and seize the opportunities science and technology offer us.

Specific actions have not been included at this stage of the strategy process. But once there is agreement on these, or other suggested objectives and directions, actions can be considered.