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## **Occupational Technology: A conceptual foundation for practice, education, and research**

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### Introduction

Societies are defined by occupations. Technology is linked by occupation to practice. Occupational technology (OccTech) describes tools that influence(d) human occupation and health in cultures, past and present. Integrating these terms into one concept attests to its relevance for OT.

OT has always been a technological field, linking ancient cultures to the industrial revolution in which the profession was established, and beyond into the future. This paper organizes diverse technologies of OT systematically as OccTech, creating a framework for practice, for education and for research.

### Objectives

Participants will:

- be introduced to a conceptual foundation (OccTech) for organizing data for practice, education, and research
- review technologies evident at the origins of the profession, and explore changes over time.
- recognize varying aspects of technology and practice worldwide.

### Description/report

Driven by the creativity of humans, technologies of agriculture, metals, and mechanization emerged. Each advance led to further invention, changing societies and cultures, impacting therapy.

### Results/Discussion

Modern OT includes low-tech adaptations and high-tech solutions, so therapists must learn adaptive and assistive technology, information and communications technology, and data management to be adequately prepared to advance our profession. Differences in culture are also to be considered. OT curricula worldwide are grappling with how to teach technology. Research will aid educators in organizing relevant material pertinent to the cultural demands of client populations.

### Conclusion

Practice revolves around everyday occupations. Social and cultural norms dictate those occupations. With the onset of cell phones, email, the World Wide Web, mobile computing, Web 2.0, etc., therapy is changing.

### Contribution to the practice/evidence base of OT

The profession recognizes the importance of new technologies, but this body of knowledge has not consistently been integrated within an identified framework that places it in concert with its history or its future. Nor has OccTech been addressed in systematic scholarly fora.

It is imperative to establish OccTech research to impact the health of persons of all ages and cultures. Such a venture should be undertaken to lay the theoretical foundation from which a unified body of knowledge will evolve.

