



Numerical Control: Making a New Technology (Oxford Series on Advanced Manufacturing)

J. Francis Reintjes

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This remarkable account describes the development of numerical control, the principal method used in the automatic control of machine tools. The technique, was pioneered and perfected at MIT during two decades of exciting work, from 1950 to 1970. The author was a direct participant in the engineering program that originated numerical control, and was involved in many of the most important decisions surrounding its evolution. He tells how the technique rose from a futuristic concept to mass-production reality, one that is essential for modern standards of industrial manufacturing. The book documents the entire process of innovation, including the scope of the original research, and the institutional and cultural environment in which it took place. The author chronicles all three main phases of effort: the numerically controlled milling machine, the automatically programmed tool system, and the computer-aided design research. More recent developments are reviewed, and the author points to the need for similar research programs in order to restore U.S. industry to a position of world leadership. The book will interest all those involved in planning and implementing innovative industrial research programs, along with historians of technology and engineering.



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