editorial

This month's cover story on page 34 seems almost as far removed from us as a rocket to the moon. Yes, it is the brave new technology we've been hearing more and more about since 1950 . . . the technology which always seems so distant to our everyday lives. Lasers, heart transplants, nuclear reactors, solid fuel propellents, biological control, computers . . . and infrared photography.

Two decades ago, after-dinner speakers were delighting their audiences with forecasts of the world changing so fast we could barely keep up. It will be a button world, they would say, with major cities only minutes away by rocket. Weather will be under man's control and food will consist of multi-colored tablets (one for breakfast, one for lunch and one for dinner).

The predictions, of course, were often incorrect — due to many of our giddy feelings in the post-war boom. But, as all science forecasters through the years have found, the most common error was lack of imagination rather than too much imagination. It was easy to predict that man would someday visit the moon through rocket power. But how many forecasters imagined that the first men on the moon would be seen and heard by everyone on earth through television?

The technological developments all along have been even more startling than predictions. But, often we are unable to recognize the significance of change because of its gradual movement.

It was almost unnoticed last month when a military jet covered the Atlantic in about two hours. A fantastic new technology, with all our expectations, has become a part of our lives without our notice. Kitchen ovens that clean themselves, adding machines you can carry in your pocket, and remote control toy powerboats that sell for $7.

The point is — this technology is not as far from our life and work as we might imagine. The very words you're reading now were set by computer. A space age idea . . . at work today.

The infrared possibilities are like that. It is not an experimental technique. It is not simply a tool for science. Right now, infrared photography is and can be a tool for management in the green industry. If you will, this is space age technology for practical use.