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### **Lasers and their Economic Impact in the United States**

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The laser was first proposed in the late 1950s and first demonstrated in 1960. It is one of several primary innovations that were a direct result of the “quantum technology revolution” which took place during the twentieth century and which superseded the industrial revolution. Over the past 50 years the laser has been integrated fully into our economy and daily lives. I will describe how lasers are an integral part of our communications, manufacturing, medical, defense, and energy infrastructures. I will also illustrate how the laser was a direct consequence of crucial government and private investment in basic research.