The landscape of research and innovation in the United States experienced major changes since the early 1980s. One of these changes has been the emergence of new forms of governance of innovation such as Moore's Law and technology roadmaps. Where did these new forms of governance of innovation come from? How can one explain their emergence? What were the forces that enabled their perpetuation? This talk argues that Moore’s Law, the observation and the rule whereby the number of transistors by microchip doubles every two years came out of a marketing campaign at Fairchild Semiconductor, a Silicon Valley firm, in the mid-1960s. A faculty member at Caltech later transformed this marketing ploy into a “law.” But it was in the early 1980s that Moore’s Law became a form of governance of innovation with the creation of technology roadmaps. These roadmaps emerged as a way for US semiconductor firms to coordinate their R&D activities and to compete with the Japanese. The technology roadmaps institutionalized Moore’s Law and transformed it into in the main principle guiding innovation in microelectronics. Thereby, they accelerated the miniaturization of microchips and their widespread adoption across a large number of industrial sectors. Many high technology industries, including biotechnology, nanotechnology, and photovoltaic cells, have adopted the technology roadmaps created by the semiconductor industry to guide their innovative activities over the last fifteen years.

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