Innovation is not a new phenomenon. Arguably, it is as old as mankind itself. However, in spite of its obvious importance, innovation has not always got the scholarly attention it deserves. This is now rapidly changing, however. As shown in the paper, research on the role of innovation economic and social change has proliferated in recent years, particularly within the social sciences, and often with a bent towards cross-disciplinarity. It is argued that this reflects the fact that no single discipline deals with all aspects of innovation, and that in order to get a comprehensive overview of the role played by innovation in social and economic change, a cross-disciplinary perspective is a must. The purpose of the paper is to provide the reader with a guide to this rapidly expanding literature. In doing so it draws on larger collective effort financed by the European Commission (the TEARI project, see http://tikpc51.uio.no/teari/teari.htm ), one of the outputs of which will emerge as Oxford Handbook of Innovation, edited by Jan Fagerberg, David Mowery and Richard R. Nelson.

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