ECL Provocation

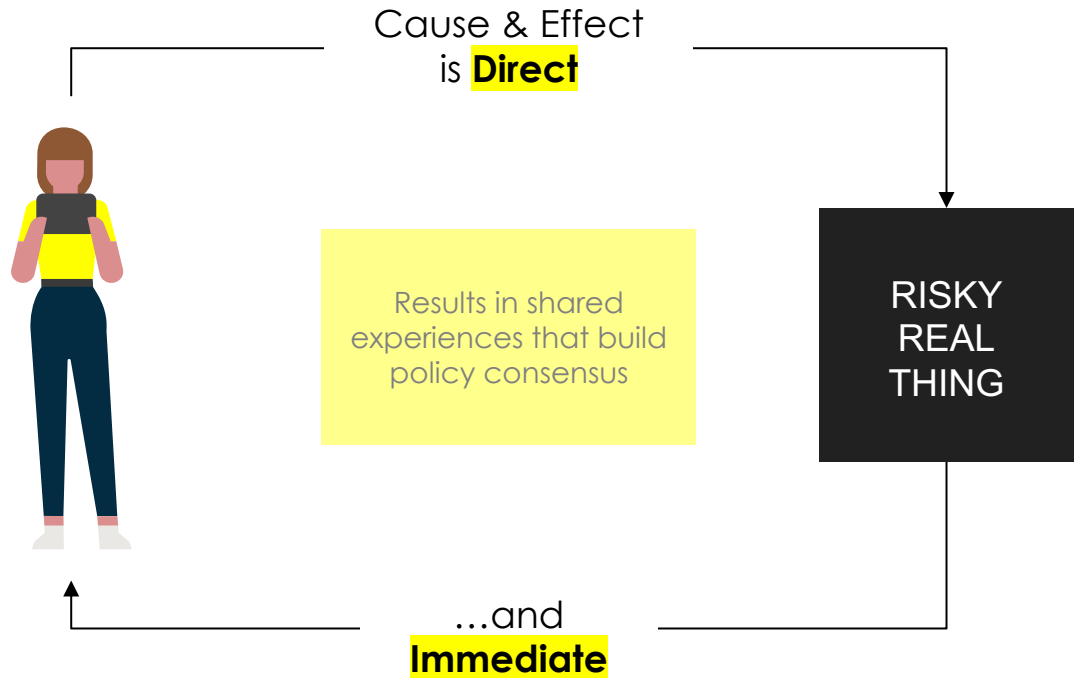## Challenges "Relating" to Digital Technology @ Scale

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We struggle to ==relate to the risks== of digital technology at scale…

We negotiate risk well when…

Cause & Effect is **Direct**

Results in shared experiences that build policy consensus

RISKY REAL THING

…and **Immediate**

The nature of "Digital Risk" is just different.

Cause & Effect is **Indirect**

Diverse experiences and outcomes that undermine consensus

RISKY DIGITAL THING

...and **Delayed**
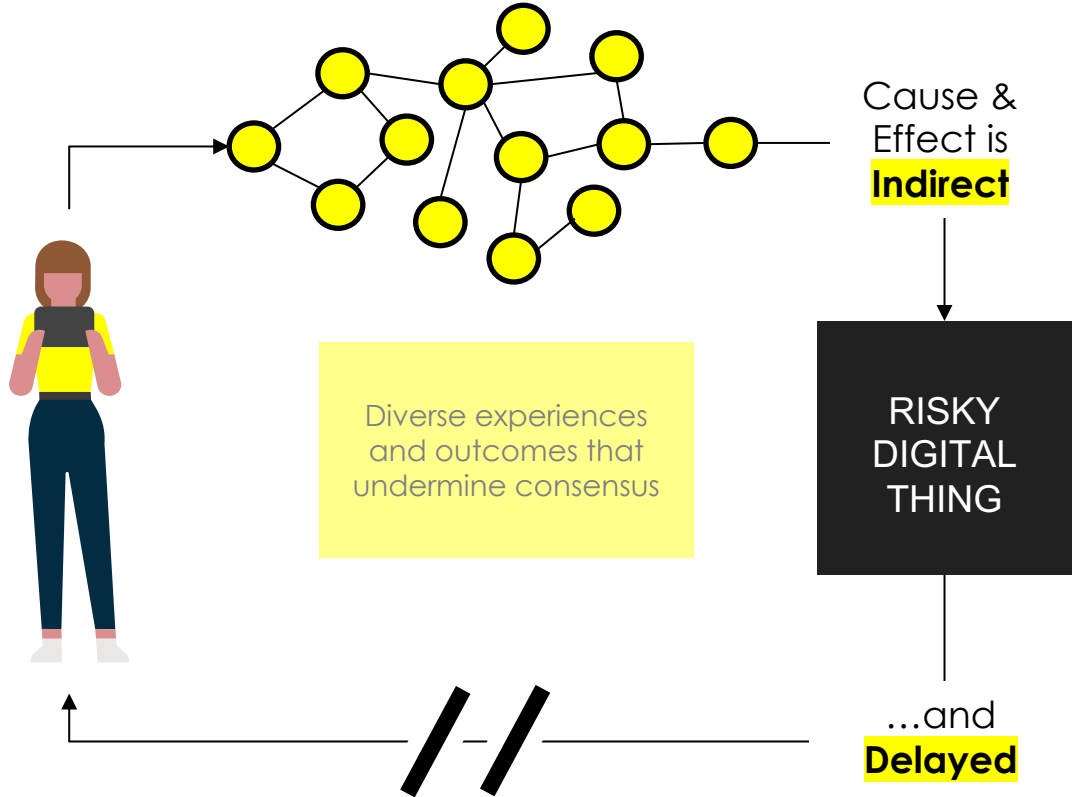
Share of United States households using specific technologies

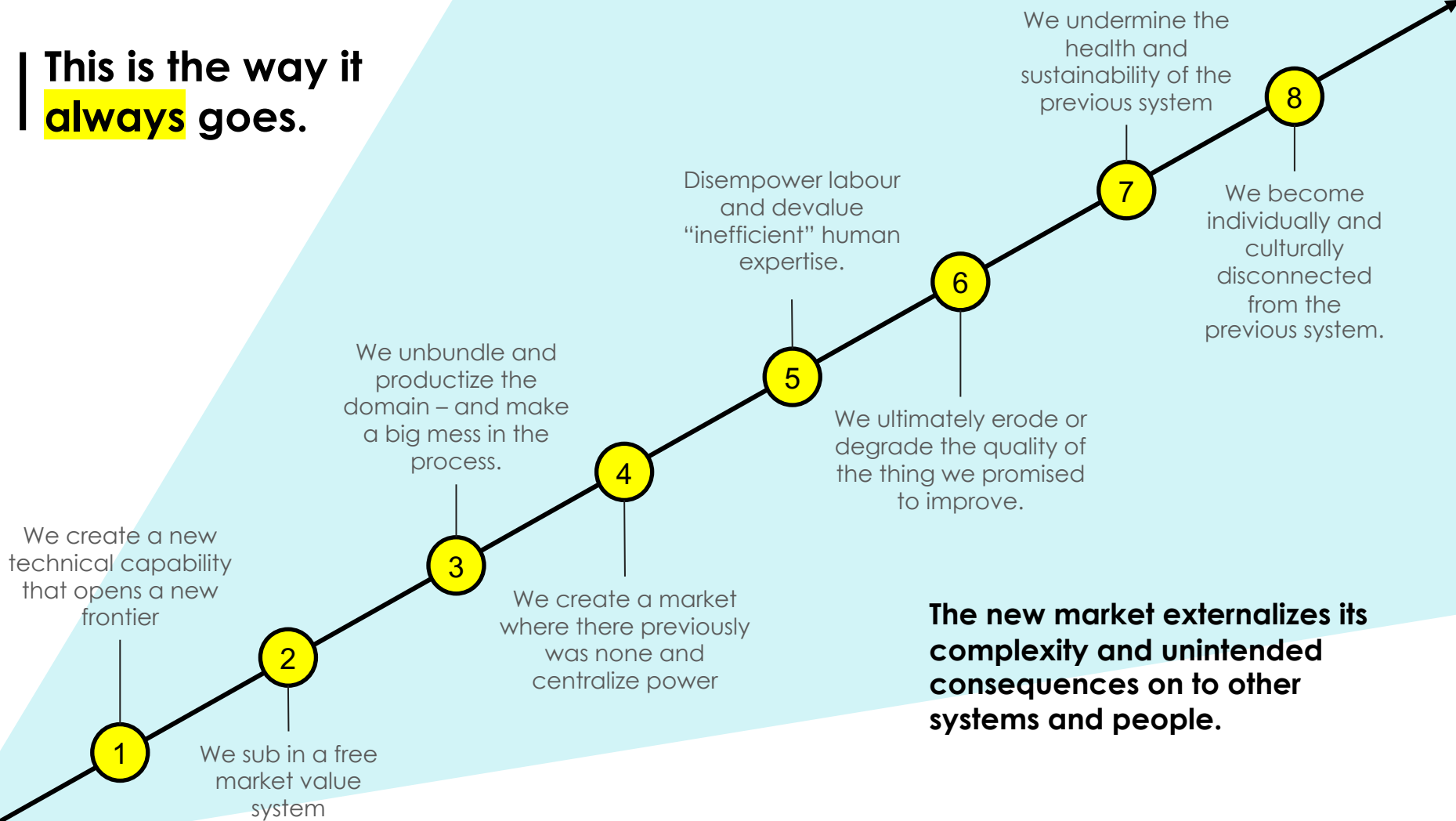Automobile, Color TV, Cellular Phones, Internet, PC, Smart Phones, Social Media, GenAI

Source: Horace Dediu; Comin and Hobijn (2004); other sources collated by Our World in Data
OurWorldInData.org/technological-change • CC BY
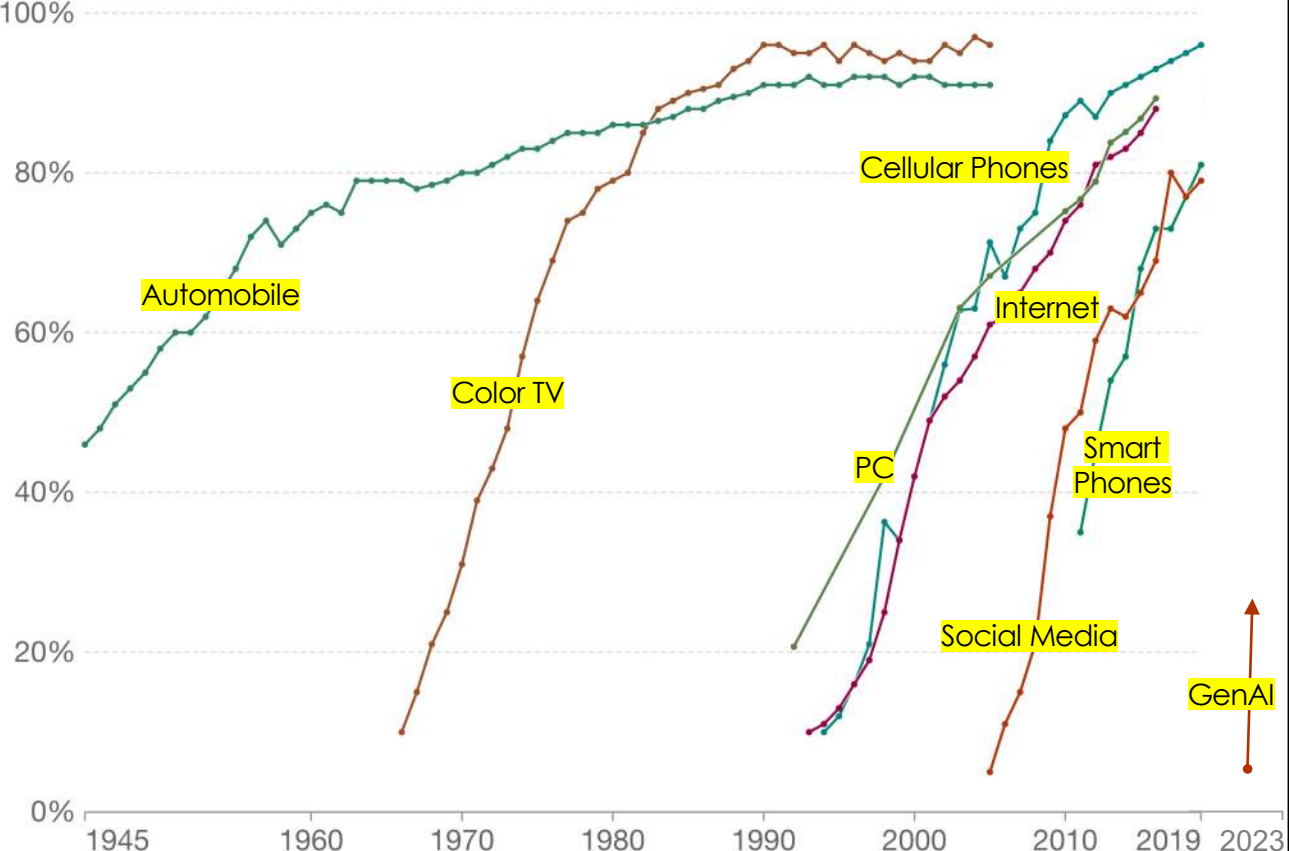
A blind spot so big, social media drove the whole world through it.

We are ==productizing== the only thing left, ourselves.

This is the way it **always** goes.

The new market externalizes its complexity and unintended consequences on to other systems and people.

1. We create a new technical capability that opens a new frontier
2. We sub in a free market value system
3. We unbundle and productize the domain – and make a big mess in the process.
4. We create a market where there previously was none and centralize power
5. Disempower labour and devalue "inefficient" human expertise.
6. We ultimately erode or degrade the quality of the thing we promised to improve.
7. We undermine the health and sustainability of the previous system
8. We become individually and culturally disconnected from the previous system.

What happens the moment we realize we have lost control.

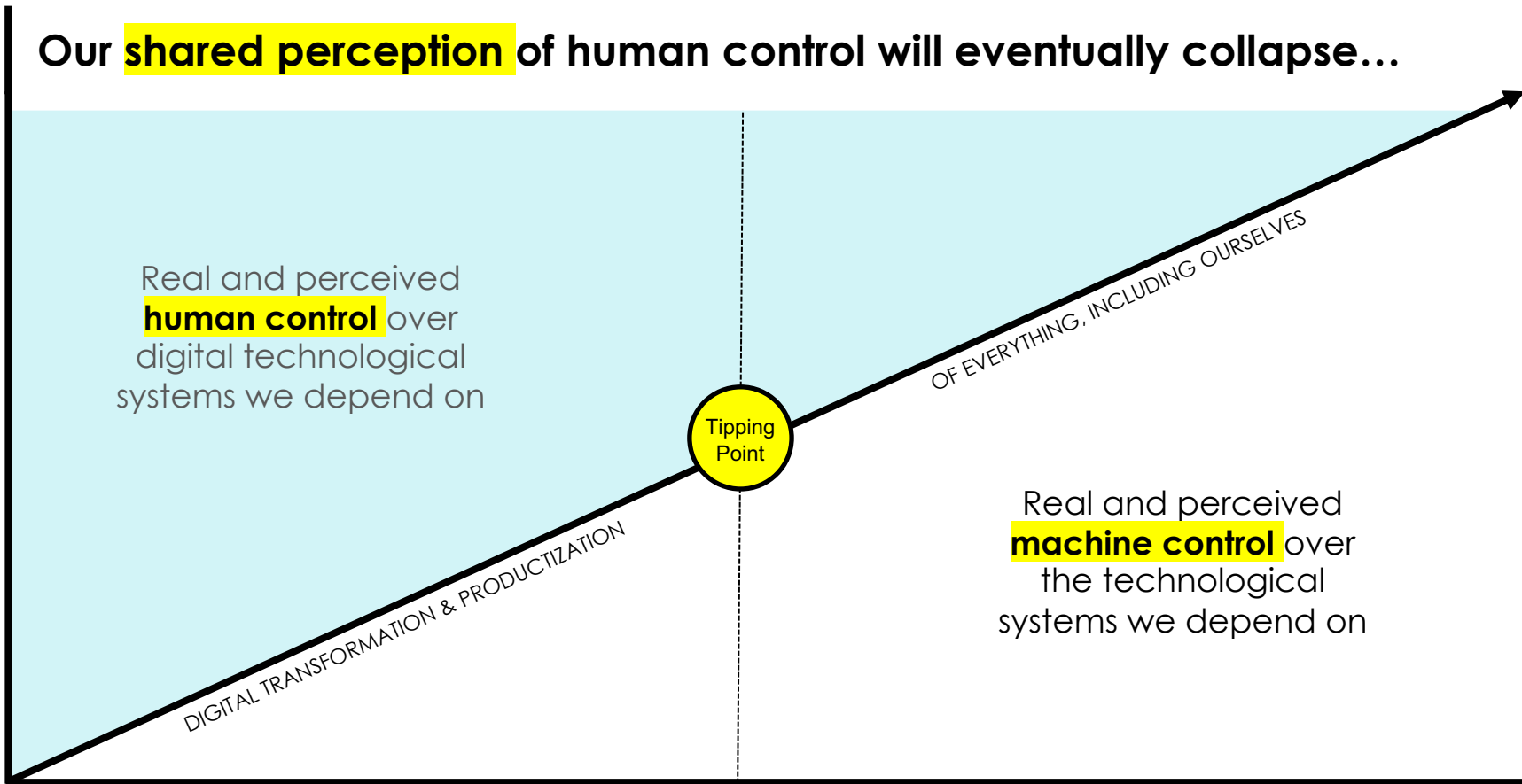# Our **shared perception** of human control will eventually collapse…

Real and perceived **human control** over digital technological systems we depend on

Tipping Point

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION & PRODUCTIZATION

OF EVERYTHING, INCLUDING OURSELVES

Real and perceived **machine control** over the technological systems we depend on

Emotional Disorders • Behavioral Disorders • Functional Disorders

Reduction in Human Intervention in Regular Operations

Anxiety/Fear

Workforce Displacement

Stress of Job Complexities

Burden of Skills Upgrade

Loss of Control and Purpose

Unhealthy Competition/ Dependence

Job-Loss/ Displacement Trauma

Serious Cognitive Issues

Serious Physiological Issues

Machine-Taking Responsibilities of Human-Cognitive Roles

| Development and Trial | Implementation | Short-Medium Term | Long-Term |

"Our assumption that **streamlining processes** will lead, in a linear fashion, to greater efficiencies, a **shift from lower-level tasks to higher-level tasks**, and thus the magic of both cost reductions and employee satisfaction, **may be fundamentally flawed**"

- "The undesirable consequences of automation and AI technologies", Gartner Maverick Research, 2019

Generative AI

"Our assumption that ~~streamlining processes~~ will lead, in a linear fashion, to greater efficiencies, a **shift from lower-level tasks to higher-level tasks**, and thus the magic of both cost reductions and employee satisfaction, **may be fundamentally flawed**"

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So **what can we do** to improve this toxic relationship?

A few directions worth exploring….

LEARN FROM OUR MISTAKES

We need to ==**lower the barriers to ethical inquiry**== at work

We needs new ways of ==**modeling the objectives an unintended consequences**== of digital system at scale

SACLE MORE OF WHAT WE WANT

We need to build systems that ==**bias the values and objectives we need**== to survive

Build ==**new systems for democratic dialogue that scale**== and can better negotiate policy at local, national and global scales

BET ON OURSELVES

==**Work to balance the power**== of new digital capabilities between labour and capital

==**Prioritize community and human interaction**== in the design of our physical world to counterbalance our digital one

THANK YOU!

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