Designing Matter: Design Ethics and Technology

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Three Big Points

- Technology is not just material objects; it is material objects together with social practices, social relationships, and systems of knowledge and meaning.

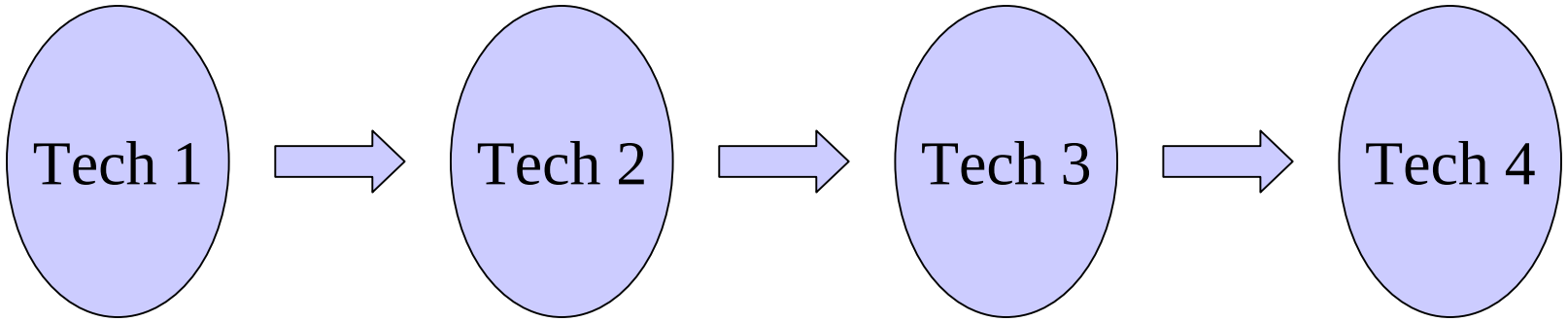
- Technology is not neutral.

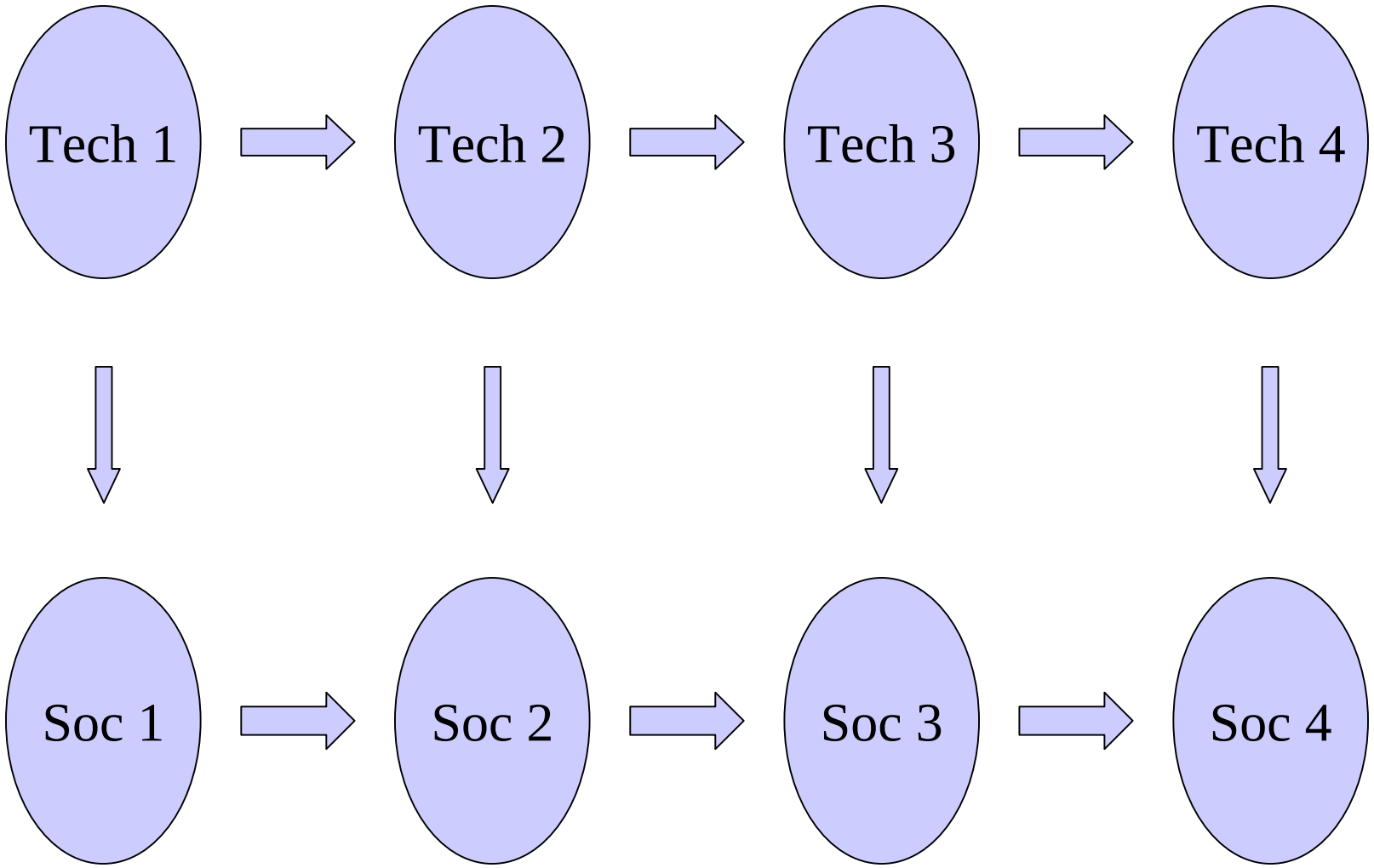
- Technology and ethics are intimately intertwined.

The Standard Account

- Technology develops in a linear, progression with one design being improved upon and then that design being improved upon and so on.

- Technology impacts society.

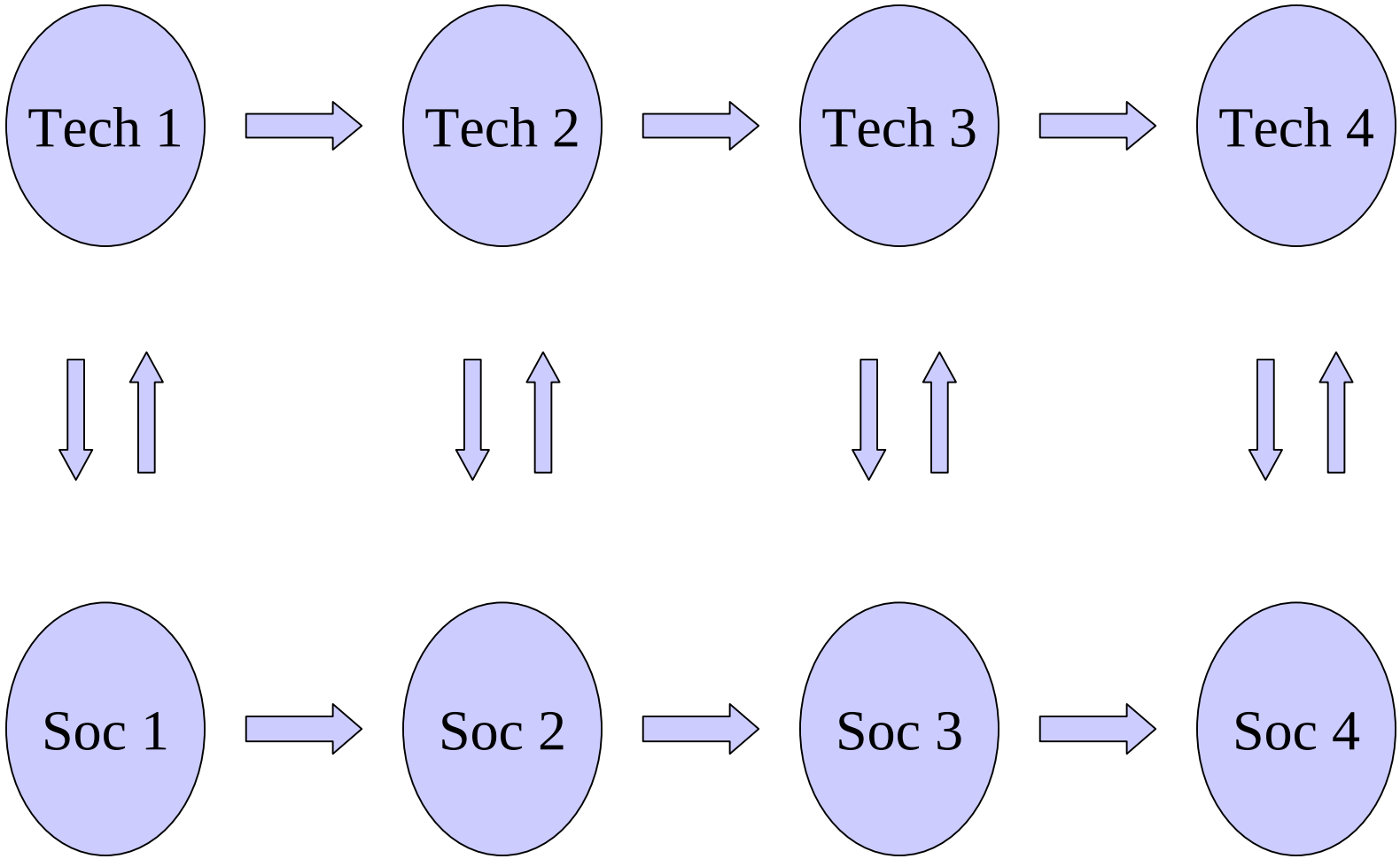

Tech 1
Tech 2
Tech 3
Tech 4


Tech 1
Tech 2
Tech 3
Tech 4
Soc 1
Soc 2
Soc 3
Soc 4

Technological Determinism:

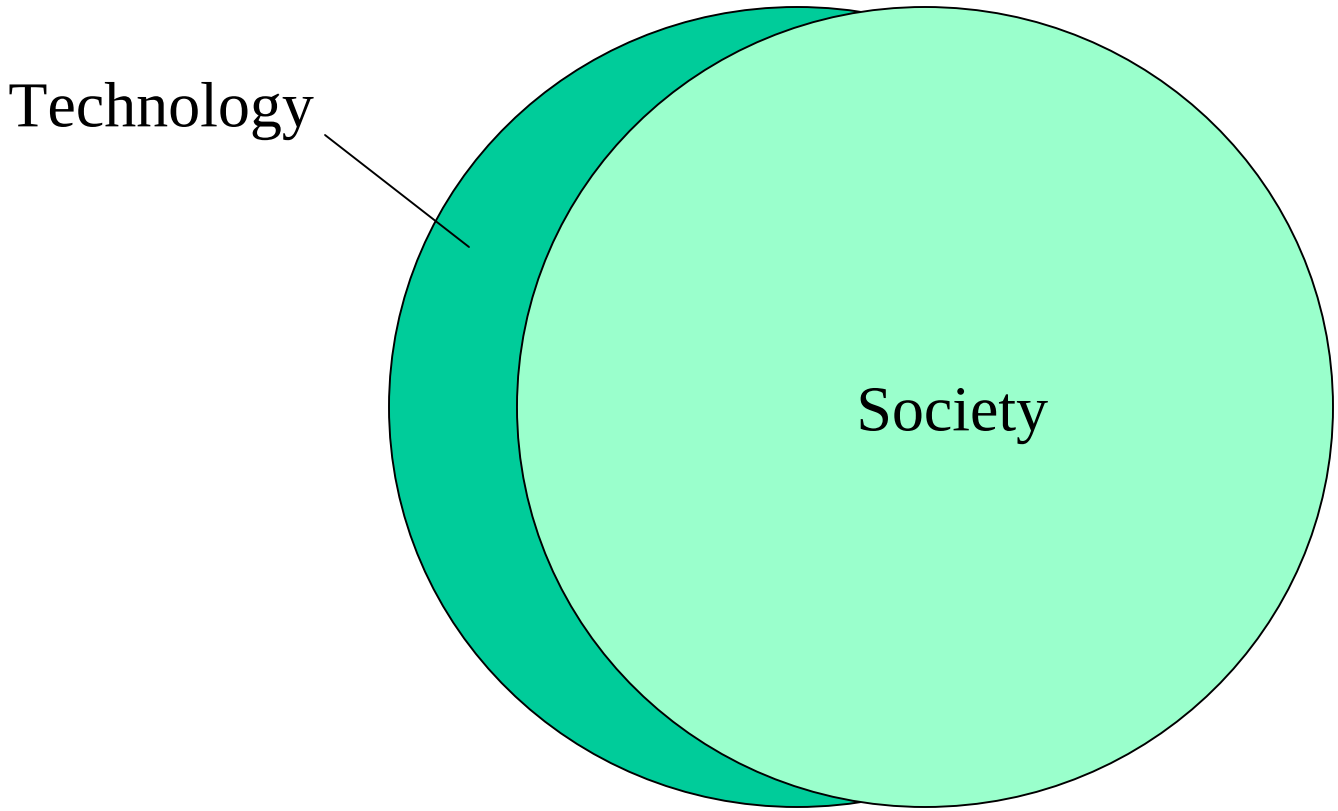
the technology a society has determines the kind of society it is -- its social and political arrangements, its economy; many of its cultural conditions.

The New Account



The New Account

- Technology is shaped by a variety of social factors; its development may be non-linear; it is contingent (doesn’t follow a natural order).
- Technology shapes society and social practices and behavior but technology and society move in lockstep with the technology being shaped as well as shaping.


Technology
Society

Examples:

- Bicycle
- Electricity
- Automobiles
- Long Island bridges
- Airplane cockpit

Return to three big points

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Technology is “congealed culture.”

Connections between ethics and technology: the Internet

First Attempts

- Moral/metaphysical
- Support
- Design
- Meaning

Connections between ethics and technology

New Directions:

- The new conceptualization of technology;
- The focus on socio-technical system;
- An account of the intentionality of technology and its role in morality.

Conclusion:

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