

All for Naught? When Learning Does Not Solve the Problem

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## Abstract

Pipeline spills are both frequent and serious pollution events. Since the 1990s, the industry has made great strides in developing computerized equipment to prevent and control leaks. Yet, pipeline spills today are almost as prevalent as they were in the 1980s, raising the question of why technology does not allow us to overcome the problem of normal accidents, even in simple systems. This paper juxtaposes learning in the pipeline industry on the incident and population level. The results indicate that broad, sweeping technological changes can miss the mark. Social processes, including the regulator that is supposed to act as a watchdog, can function to mask this problem by promoting the technological "solution".

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Placeholder

## References