

# Addressing the Societal Challenges Presented by Emerging Technologies



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## Societal Cycles of Concern About Emergent Technologies

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### Concern Cycles

- Reliable evidence, popular opinion, and policy have consistently been at odds
- New technologies from television (1960-1990), arcade video games (1970s), beepers (1980s) home video games (1990s), online games (2000s), the internet (1995-2000s) have been a focus to different degrees
- Social media (2004-present), and smartphones (2007-present) are very much the current focus
- Little that is useful is learned between cycles!

### Rapid Adoption

- Two in five children (7 to 12 years) and four in five teenagers (13 to 17 years) in the UK are now using generative AI tools and services.
- This rapid adoption quickly eclipsed youth uptake of social media, the most popular topic of debate and study today.
- Reflecting on where work on social media went badly wrong provides a lens for understanding and avoiding repeating these mistakes.
- Inform how we study how young people use and are influenced by AI

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## Challenges to Societal Understanding of Emergent Technologies

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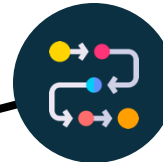
### Poorly defined theory/questions

- Theory lags behind tech innovation
- Theory focuses on tech use in isolation



### Inappropriate policy translation

- Causal interpretations abound in research, media, and policy
- Universal guidelines proposed with limited basis in evidence



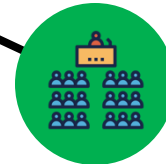
### Poorly defined constructs/measures

- Screen time comprises myriad different uses
- Perceived use differs from recorded use



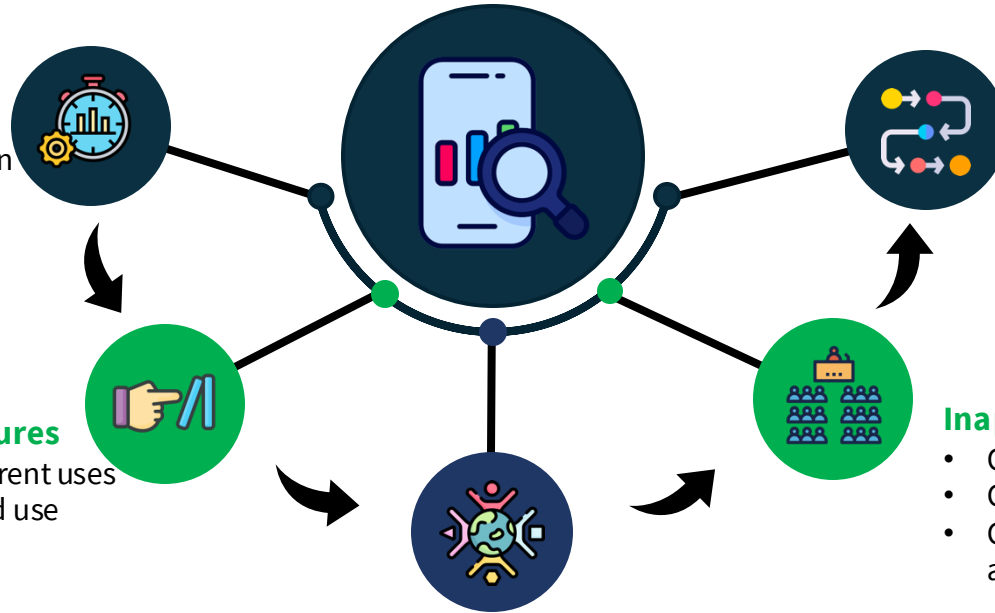
### Inappropriate design/analysis

- Observational data limits causal inference
- Causal estimands rarely defined
- Confounds, known and unknown, rarely addressed

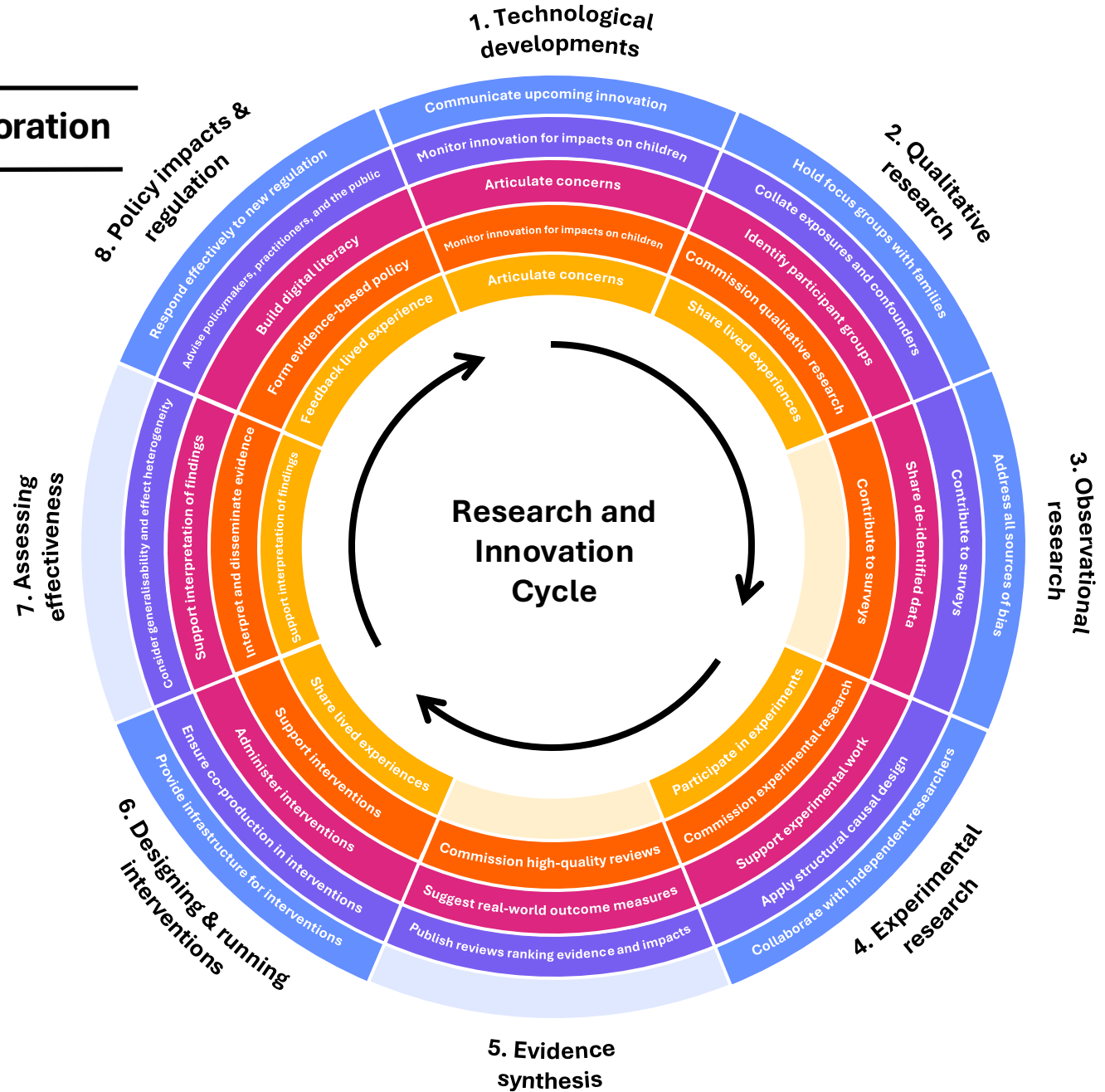
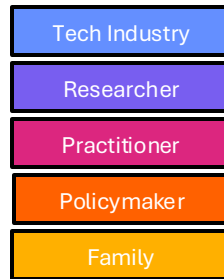


### Low-quality available datasets

- Existing cohort data contains largely outdated and coarse media use measures
- Research overwhelmingly reflects young people in high-income countries
- Mental health measures lack generalizability



# Framework for Structured Collaboration



# Thank You!

