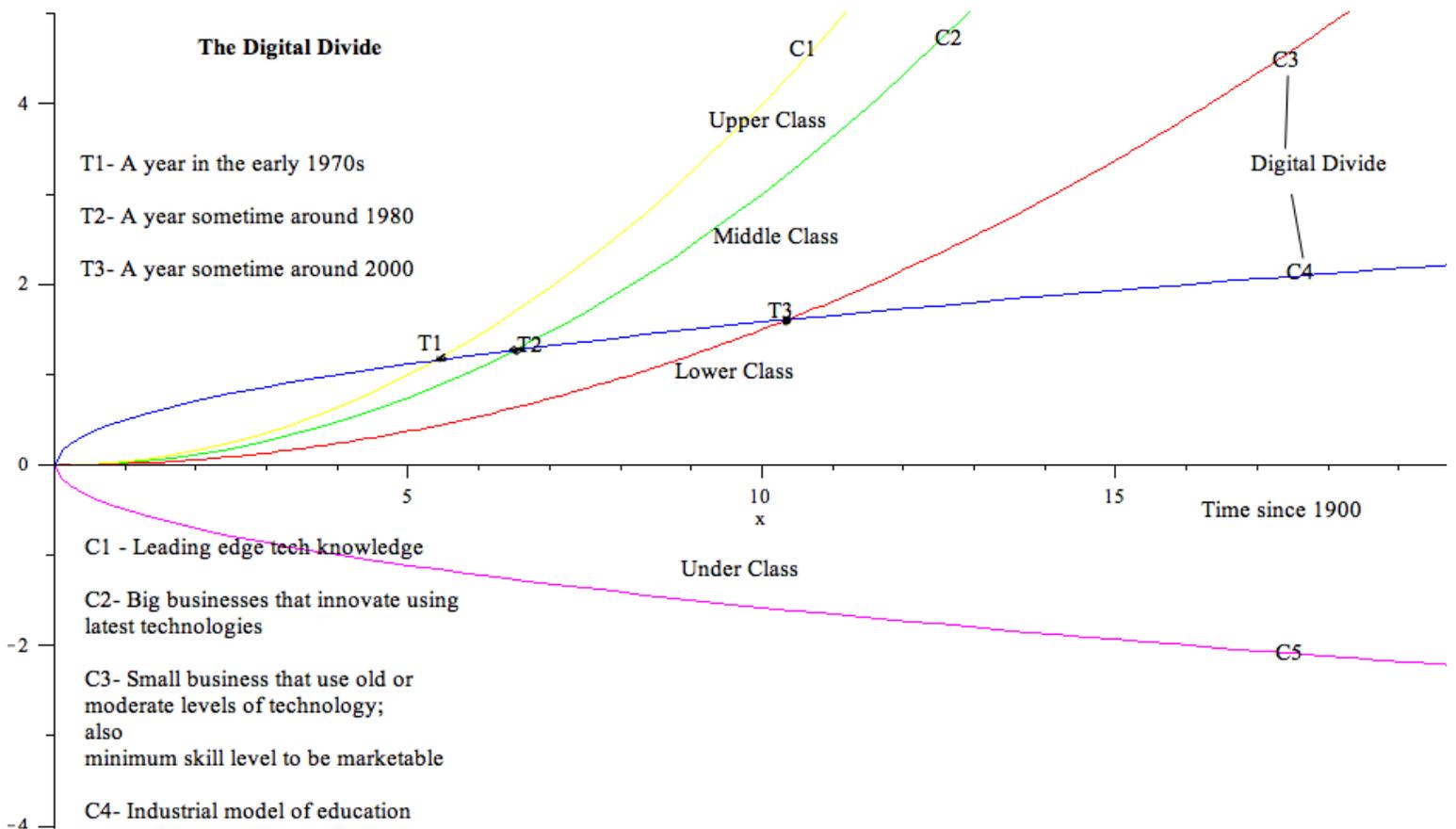


Need for Immediate Policy Implementation

Just as technological innovation increases exponentially, so too does its impact on society increase exponentially. The trend is that those already with material wealth and power will expand their wealth and power exponentially with respect to those with less. There is a real danger that African Americans and other minority groups will become a permanent underclass with respect to White Americans if the wealth, power, and technical knowledge gaps continue to widen. There is an urgent need to put in place educational policy on the national level to close the technology knowledge gap. It is a national problem, requiring a pervasive national response.

Figure 1



The above figure depicts the growing digital divide between the technological advances / demands in society and the ability of students in public schools to match those advances / demands. The following are further details to be gathered from the figure:

- 1) The assumption is that there is a strong correlation between the level of one's mastery over technology and one's class status in society.
- 2) Prior to T1 on the figure (early 1970's) is a time period where students with a public school education along with some college (curve C4), were able to stay ahead of societal and business demands for technology. This public education was developed based on an industrial model and grows logarithmically, as represented by curve C4. It does not keep pace with the exponential growth of technological innovation in society and business as represented by curves C1 and C2 respectively.
- 3) The region between the C1 and C2 curves represents the segment of the population who are leading the charge of technological innovation. It also represents a significant portion of the upper class of society. A public high school education with some college enabled most to potentially penetrate into the upper class of society. Of course this did not include most minorities who were marginalized if they were fortunate enough to achieve this level of education. After T2, around 1980, a public education with some college was not sufficient to break into the upper class status.
- 4) The area between the C2 and C3 curves represents the segment of the population that has adapted well to technological innovation and can successfully apply it to business needs. This area also represents a significant portion of the middle class of society. A public high school education with some college enabled most to penetrate into the

middle class of society in the times between T1 and T2. After completing public education and college by 1986, I was able to enter the computer field and earn a middle class living despite continued racial barriers. This level of education was not typically enough to penetrate into the upper class during this time period. After T3, around the year 2000, a public education even with some college was not sufficient to maintain a middle class status.

- 5) The area below the C3 curve represents people in the lower class who have not met the minimum level of technical skill businesses require for employment at any given time.
- 6) After time T3, the C3 curve diverges above and away from the C4 curve. This represents the digital divide that the industrial model of public education that most public schools still use, is incapable of closing. Students with a level of technological skill between C4 and C5 will remain in the lower class of society. They may even enter the permanent underclass to live a life of destitution or crime.
- 7) The region below the horizontal time axis represents a negative technology skill set, meaning people with backward technology conceptions and habits that are prohibitive to productive work. This is the permanent underclass.