

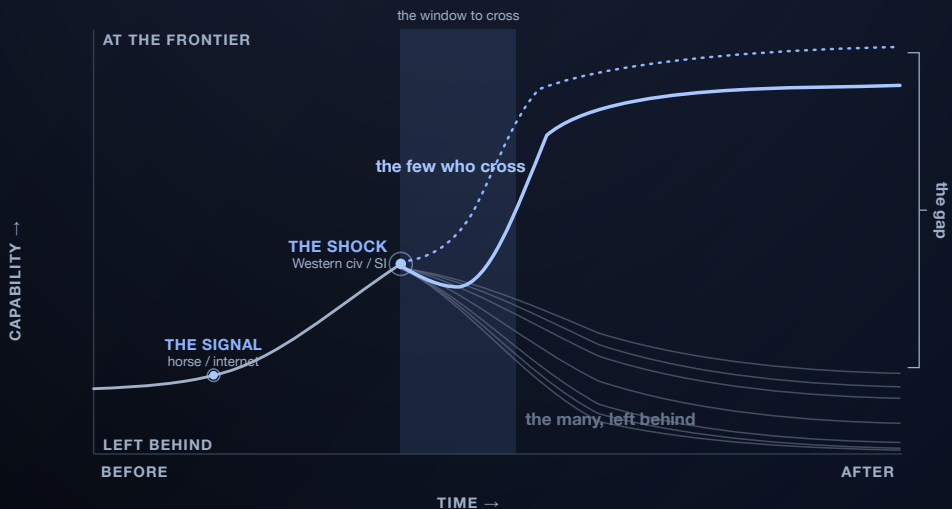


Wiltshire Ventures

PLAYBOOK · RESEARCH NOTE

The Comanche Curve

Business in the age of SI, and the narrow window to cross into it.



Why the Comanche?

For a few years now, I keep coming back to the Comanche when I think about Super Intelligence (SI) and what it will do to our lives. It sounds strange at first. Hear me out.

The Comanche were once the most feared band of Indians in North America. They rose to power and ruled the Great Plains for a century. Their rise started with the horse, brought west by Spanish expansion, and the culture of dominance in war they built on top of it. The horse was new technology to them. Not every tribe adopted it, the same way not every business embraced the internet when it arrived in 2000. The Comanche won because they mastered it. By age 10, their boys could ride bareback and take down a buffalo on their own.

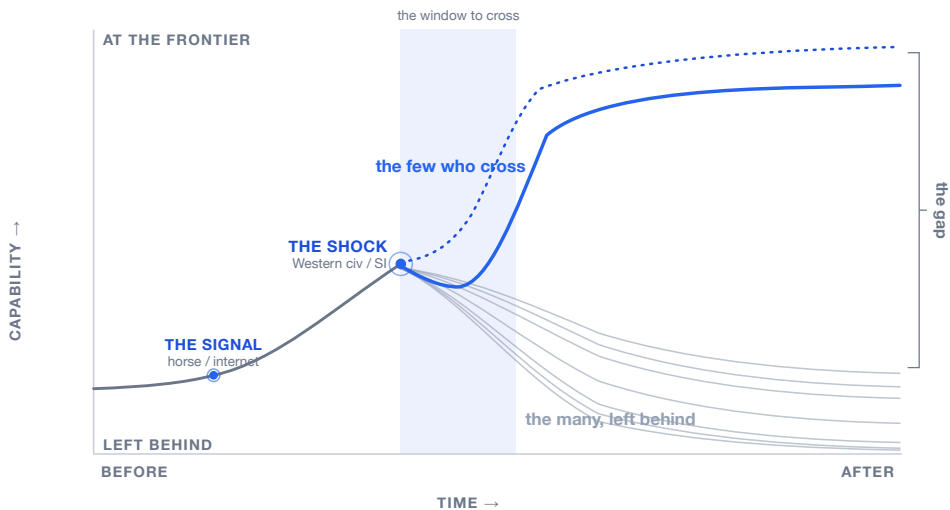
But mastering the horse was not the end of it. Another wave of change was coming, and this one moved faster than anyone alive could have imagined. Within a single generation, the Comanche way of life was gone. The dominance they built on one technology was overtaken by a faster one.

That's the story I see coming for us with SI. We're the dominant species today. But the Comanche give us the best roadmap for how SI could change that, if we're not ready.

The model: when the frontier moves, standing still is falling.

Put capability on one axis, what a group can actually do, and let time run left to right. When a group dominates, they sit at the frontier: the best there is, exactly where the Comanche sat on the Plains. Then a superior technology arrives, and the frontier does not nudge. It lifts away.

From the dominant group's view, they did nothing wrong. They could not see the superior technology coming, or how fast it would arrive. So they stay the same while capabilities they do not understand climb exponentially, and the distance between them and what is now possible becomes a gap. As the gap widens, the dominant group gets left behind.



The Comanche Curve: the signal lifts a group up, the shock lifts the frontier away, and the many drop off fast.

The signal: the horse was their internet.

Before the horse, the Comanche were a small mountain people. Around 1700 they were introduced to the horse, a superior technology brought by Spanish explorers, and they reorganized their entire way of life around it. It gave them range and speed, perfected their hunting of the bison, let them dominate in war, and became a force multiplier in trade. Within two generations they held the Southern Plains and checked the ambitions of Spain, Mexico, and the Republic of Texas.

The horse was their version of the internet. A general-purpose technology that multiplied what a single person could do and carried an entire generation to dominance. They did not inherit that dominance. They adopted their way into it, while other tribes did not.

The shock: Western civilization was their SI.

After dominating on the horse, the next superior technology, the Comanche version of

SI, arrived as the rapid innovation of Western settlers and their way of life. Railroads, repeating rifles, the telegraph, mass settlement, disease, and the wholesale hunting of the bison. Western values and innovation spread like wildfire and did not wait for anyone to be ready.

For the Comanche, this was their SI moment. A drastically superior force, arriving in a small window of time, that changed everything about their way of life before there was time to adjust. Like most of us would have been, they were caught off guard and deeply resistant. Most did not adapt to what Western civilization brought. Most could not believe the world had already changed so fast.

The crossing: almost no one made it. Quanah Parker did.

The last chief of the Comanche was Quanah Parker. He was as devout a Comanche as anyone who lived before him, and during his reign the Comanche dominated and tormented anyone who got in their way. They sat at the peak of the frontier's capability.

As change swept west, Quanah Parker began to recognize that something was different about the new capabilities and how fast the settlers adopted them. He fought the change as hard as anyone alive, until he saw exactly where holding out would lead his people. He tried to bring the Comanche together to cross into the new world as one. Very few saw it the way he did. So Quanah let go of the old world he knew and set out to learn the new one. He became a rancher, a negotiator, a businessman. He became a bridge between two civilizations, without ever pretending the old world was coming back.

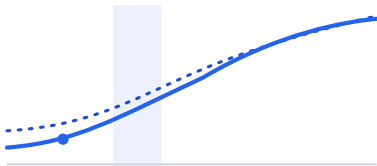
Years later he was asked how the Comanche had lost their land. He did not make a speech. He had a man sit next to him on a bench and told him to push. As the man leaned in, Quanah was slowly forced off the bench and onto the ground.

The lesson in the bench is not only that they were pushed. It is that the pressure was steady, it did not stop, and the people who survived were the ones who moved before they ran out of bench.

The same arc, twice, and now a third time.

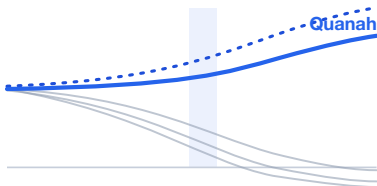
We are on the same path today: signal, then shock, then a new way of life. The

Comanche rode the wave their signal started, the horse, and then they were caught by the shock of Western civilization. We have just ridden a wave up too. The question is what the next one does to us.



The signal: the horse was their internet.

Around 1700 they mastered the horse and built an empire across the Plains. A technology that multiplied one person's reach and lifted an entire generation.



The shock: Western civilization was their SI.

Railroads, rifles, disease and the collapse of the bison arrived at once. Caught off guard, most resisted. Almost no one crossed.



Now: SI is our Western civilization.

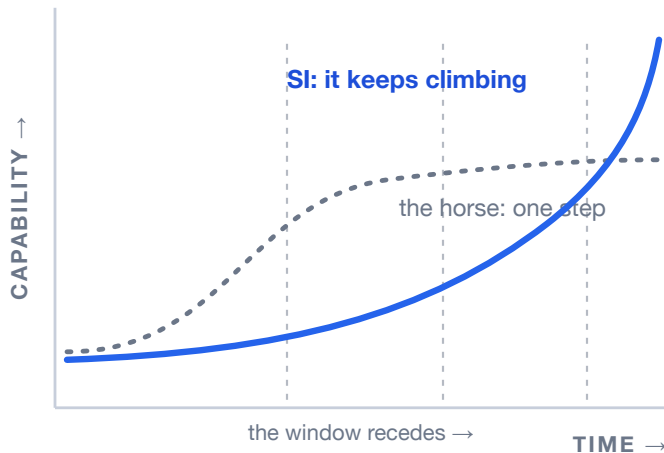
We rode the internet up while a faster wave built in SI. What we do next is still unwritten. But history is clear: the only group that climbs is the one that adopts early and fast.

Why SI is the fastest wave yet.

Every wave in the Comanche story moved faster than the last. That pattern runs through all of history when innovation sweeps a continent. But the Comanche are the first clear case of change wiping out a way of life in a short span. It did not take centuries. It took decades.

SI is compressing that gap further, from generations to a few years, and perhaps less. It is on the edge of moving faster than any change in human history. So we turn to the closest examples we have of people meeting change, to figure out what our plan has to be to survive. When the frontier rises faster than a person, a company, or a society

can retool, the window to cross does not simply open and close. It recedes. It keeps moving away while you run toward it.



The horse was one step up in capability, then a plateau. SI keeps climbing, so the window to cross recedes as you approach it.

Getting through the window and out the other side asks something uncomfortable of us. We have to accept that the things we love doing today, the things we are good at, the things that make us feel like who we are, may go by the wayside in an instant. And it asks us to do exactly what Quanah Parker did. Do not resist the wave. Do not wait for it to slow down, because it never will. Take on the new knowledge and new skills SI offers now, while there is still time.

The takeaway.

Quanah Parker did not survive by resisting the new world or by mourning the old one. He survived by recognizing there was little he could do to change what was coming. He knew the new world would arrive whether he liked it or not. So the question, if you want to survive, is simple: how fast, and how soon, will you adapt?

SI will not ask our permission to move the frontier. It will simply move it. Our one real choice is whether we start climbing now and build the SI skills, habits, and judgment the new world will run on, or whether we discover, too late, how few of us

made the crossing into the new age.

Whatever you do, move before you run out of bench.