

Should the IT Assimilation Concept Span the Adoption Lifecycle?

DIGIT Conference
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Beware of analogies...



The image shows the cover of the book "IT Doesn't Matter" by Nicholas G. Carr. The cover features a photograph of a broken metal key on the left side. The text on the cover includes the title "IT Doesn't Matter" in a large, serif font, the author's name "by Nicholas G. Carr", and a short blurb: "As information technology's power and ubiquity have grown, its strategic importance has diminished. The way you approach IT investment and management will need to change dramatically." The top right corner of the cover has the text "HBR AT LARGE". At the bottom left of the slide, the date "12/14/0" is visible. At the bottom center, there is a small line of text: "In 1968, a young Intel engineer named success, a fact clearly reflected in their".

The Obstacle Course Analogy



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The Obstacle Course View of the Adoption Lifecycle



Awareness/
Interest



Evaluation/
Trial



Commitment/
Adoption



Implementation/
Deployment

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Two questions

- Q1. If it is granted that a full lifecycle concept can be useful, why should we call it “assimilation”?
- Q2. Are there boundaries on the application of the full lifecycle concept whatever we call it, i.e., are there situations when we should not use full a lifecycle measure of organizational innovation?

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Q1. Why should we have assimilation refer to the whole lifecycle?

- We already have a large variety of terms for the post-adoption process...
 - Implementation
 - Acceptance
 - Internal diffusion
 - Routinization
 - Institutionalization
 - Injection depth/breadth
 - **Infusion**
 - **Deployment**
- The other alternatives for a lifecycle-spanning term have problems...
 - Adoption process
 - Implementation process
 - Innovation process

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Q2. When should we *not* use a concept that spans the adoption lifecycle

- When our theory discriminates among stages
- When we have a specific interest in some particular stage
- When it can not generally be assumed that greater/faster assimilation is “good”
- When there is a lot of rejection or “discretionary” discontinuance

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When to *not* to use a concept/measure that spans the adoption lifecycle

- **When our theory discriminates among stages**

Less discrimination

- Organizational learning
- Resource-based view
- Compatibility/fit
- Competitive/environmental effects

More discrimination

- Power/politics
- Institutional theories
- Adaptive Structuration
- Culture (organic vs. mechanistic)

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- When our theory discriminates among stages
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Examples

- Acceptance – Davis and (many) others*
- Initiation – Ping & Swanson
- Infusion – Saga & Zmud
- Implementation tactics – Paul Nutt
- Discontinuance – Parthasarathy & Bhattacharjee

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Examples

- Destiny
- Mindfulness
- Options thinking

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Some parting words of advice on post-adoption research

- Beware models that are not highly post-adoption specific
- Beware range restriction
- Beware recursion
- Beware the logic of variance models
- Beware technology vintage effects
- Beware technology destiny

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