

not? Is it any wonder that our ability to predict the future is often lamentable? Is it any surprise that given the fluid nature of our environment we are reduced to hoping to keep afloat by catching the latest wave of change? Is it really that shocking that in practice we're forced to copy what others are doing, to go with the market as we all swarm around new concepts?

All of these thoughts were swirling through my mind as I looked at that evolution axis of genesis, custom, product and commodity on map. It seemed so simple. I had obviously been seduced by this. But it seemed to work! I could find no evidence to support this pattern. I had probably wasted months trying to solve an impossible problem. Help!!!

That first question

The standard model I've outlined contains the random appearance of innovation, different rates of diffusion and both sustaining and disruptive change. Whilst it sounds simple, it is hopelessly complex in practice. It was probably a day or two after I had decided that this was probably a lost cause that I thought of the first question that I needed to ask. *What actually constitutes an innovation?*

Whether something is an innovation or not partially depends upon the perspective of the observer. Hence, the Bessemer convertor was a process improvement to iron and steel manufacturers but a product innovation to suppliers of equipment for those industries. Equally, the modern day provision of computing resources through large utility suppliers (such as Amazon's EC2 service) is certainly a new business