

This transformation of practice is also associated with inertia i.e. we become used to the “old” and trusted best practice (which is based upon one set of characteristics) and the “new” practice (based upon a more evolved underlying activity) is less certain, requires learning and investment. Hence we often have inertia to the underlying change due to governance. This was one of the principle causes of inertia to cloud computing.

Furthermore any application we had which were based upon the “old” best practice lacks the benefits of this new more evolved world. These benefits of industrialisation always include efficiency, speed of agility and speed of development in building new things. Our existing applications became our legacy to our past way of doing things, part of the corporate corpus. They needed re-architecting but that involves cost and so, we try to magic up ways of having the new world but just like the past. We want all the benefits of volume operations and commodity components but using customised hardware designed just for us! It doesn’t work, the Red Queen eventually forces us to adapt. We often fight it for too long though.

This sort of co-evolution and the inevitable dominance of a more evolved practice is highly predictable. We can use it to anticipate new forms of organisations that emerge as well as anticipate the changes in practice before they hit us. It’s how in Canonical in 2008, we knew we had to focus on the emerging DevOps world and to make sure everyone (or as many as possible) that were building in that space were working on Ubuntu — but that’s a later chapter. It’s enough to know that we exploited this change for our own benefits. As one CIO