

Christensen's work on disruptive innovation, an existing industry can be disrupted by the introduction of a new technology that offers different performance attributes from those established. In other words, the diffusion of one thing can be substituted for another. For example, hydraulic excavators disrupted cable excavators and its associated suppliers. However, the same process could also be continuous. These innovations could be improving and sustaining e.g. a better car, a better phone, a better computer or a more efficient means of steel manufacturing such as the Bessemer convertor.

It seemed that organisations were competing in an ecosystem with others and the desire to differentiate was driving the creation of innovations that diffuse forcing all companies to adapt (*the Red Queen effect*, [chapter 3](#)). The innovations themselves appear somewhat randomly, often by fortuitous accident and whilst some innovations disrupt, others will sustain. Furthermore, the innovations themselves might be novel or represent an incremental improvement to some past innovation e.g. a better car rather than the first car. The process of diffusion itself is complex, changing in terms of the rate of diffusion and has pitfalls such as the chasm. Given this complexity, how could I hope to describe a process of evolution?

With such an environment, how could any CEO be anything but bewildered and lost by the apparent randomness of competition? Where will the next great innovation appear? Will it be sustaining or a disruptive change? How quickly will it spread? Will it not spread? Will it jump the chasm? Will it impact me? Should we be early adopters or