**Why are a large number of legacy software systems written more than 10 years ago still being used today?**

The term "legacy” connotes something old that is past down from one generation to the next. (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The use of this term is derogatory, if not ironic, when used to describe software systems, which *ought* to be technological innovations. As such, "legacy software systems” is a term used for archaic software systems, which ought to be obsoleted and replaced yet continue to be used in the environment.

Why do these old, out-dated, and berated systems continue to be in use today? One expert in the insurance industry, which is riddled with legacy systems, suggests that although older software systems "may not be cool, [...] they can still get the job done” (Trembly, 2011). He adds that there are various middleware technologies that allow the old systems to integrate with newer technologies such that there is no pressing need to replace the old systems. Moreover, if the insurance industry were to invest in new software systems every time there is innovation, they would be rolling out new software every three years or so. Instead, the insurance industry has held onto their old systems is because they are trying to get the most value out of their initial investments as possible (Trembly, 2011).

If an old system is working adequately, why should it be replaced? First, the older system may not be compatible with new technologies. Middleware often bridges that gap. The more important reason is that the older system may no longer be supported. This is more likely the deathknell of old systems. Consumers can be forced to replace their systems when those systems are no longer supported. For example, Microsoft announced that it would no longer support Windows XP in April 2014 (Wolpe, 2013). This has forced many organizations to begrudgingly retire that system in favor of a newer one.

The irony of the situation is that, there will always be legacy software systems. Even as organizations rollout new software solutions, even newer ones will be created. There will be a perpetual turnover of systems. Why, then, not hold on to the systems as long as possible?

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