

Why Some Ideas Refuse to Diffuse

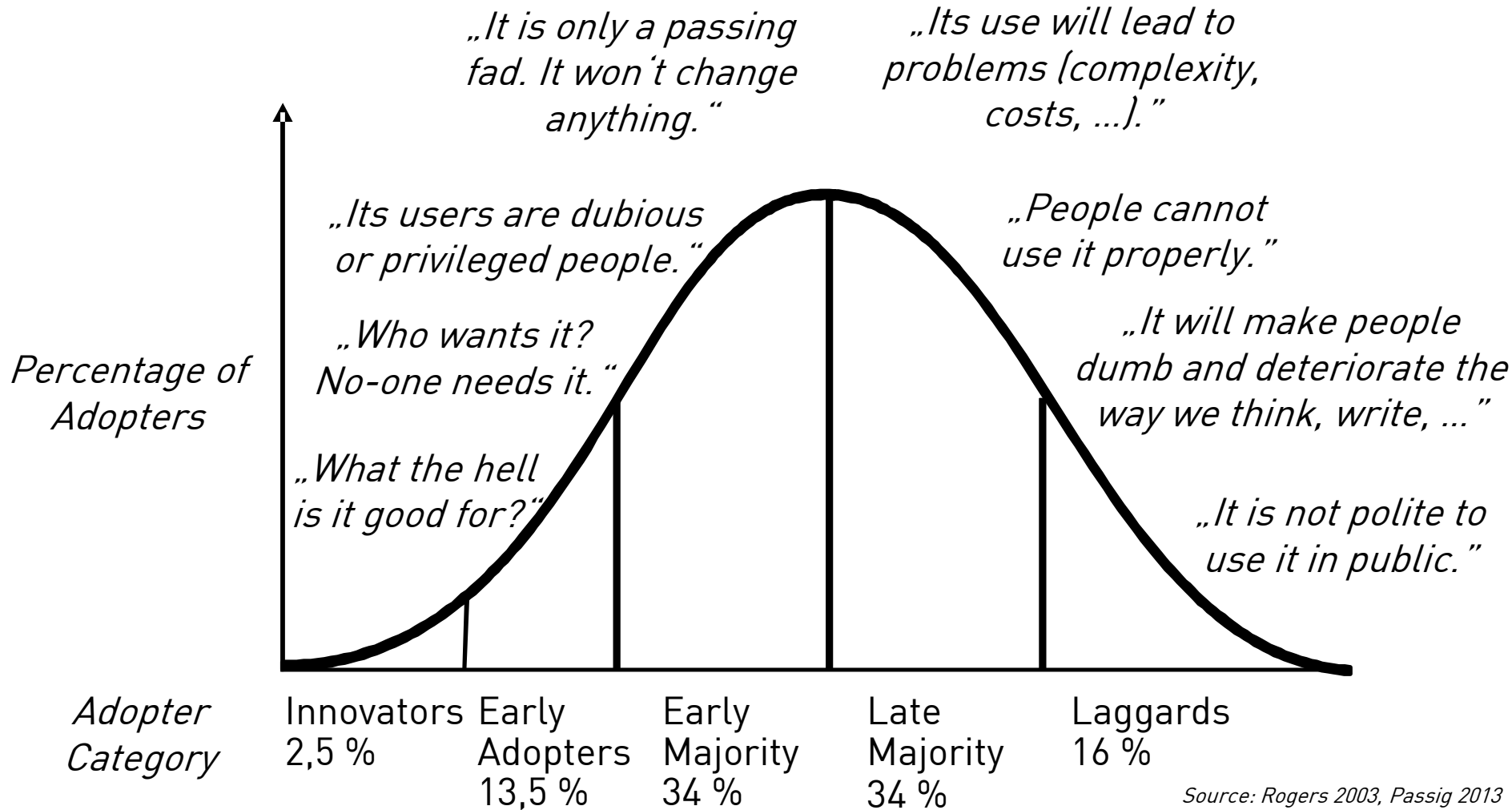
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Technological Criticism



Source: Rogers 2003, Passig 2013

Attributes Influencing Adoption:

- **Relative Advantage**

Degree to which an innovation is perceived as being better than the idea it supersedes.

- **Compatibility**

Degree to which an innovation is perceived as consistent with existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters.

- **Complexity**

Degree to which an innovation is perceived as relatively difficult to understand and use.

- **Trialability and Observability**

Degree to which an innovation may be experimented with on a limited basis and to which the results of an innovation are visible to others.

“The individuals’ perception of the attributes of an innovation, not the attributes as classified objectively by experts or change agents affect its rate of adoption.”

Source: Rogers 2003

Mobile Phone (Example)

Perceived Attributes of Mobile Phones:

- **Relative Advantages**

Time savings (e.g. missed appointments, caught in traffic jam)
Communication while driving and walking
Use during emergencies
Status symbol

- **Compatibility**

Compatible with regular phones (critical mass)
Individualization through designs, colors, ring tones, ...

- **Complexity**

Easy to understand: Works like a regular phone with extra advantages
Easy to use: Operates exactly like a regular phone

- **Trialability and Observability**

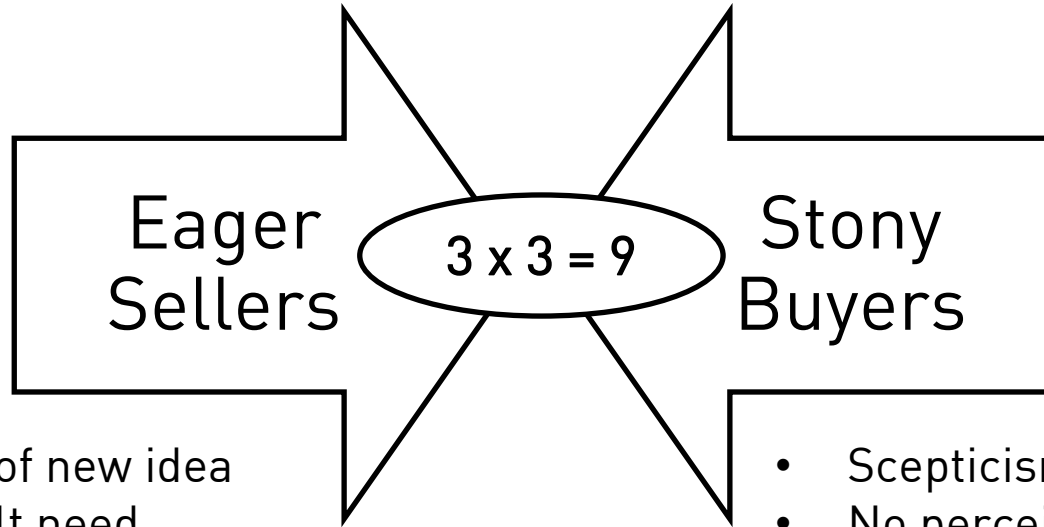
Borrow a friend's phone, rental cars with phones, initial months of free service, variety of incentives (e.g. free mobile phones)
Highly observable, both visually and auditorily (ring tones)



Source: Rogers 2003

Relative Advantage

Misconception between developers and possible adopters



- Convinced of new idea
- Strongly felt need
- Dissatisfaction with old solution
- Innovation becomes status-quo

→ **Overestimation of perceived advantages of innovation (factor 3)**

- Scepticism
- No perceived need
- Endowment effect
- Status quo bias

→ **Overestimation of perceived advantages of established product (factor 3)**

Source: Gourville 2006

Disruptive Technologies

According to the technological S-curve a new technology replaces an old one when it has a better performance – higher relative advantage.

Disruptive Technologies, however, typically have a lower relative advantage concerning the „usual“ product performance than existing technologies, at least in the near-term.

But Disruptive Technologies typically have the following relative advantages over existing technologies:

- Simplicity
- Convenience
- Affordability
- Accessibility

Sources: Christensen 2011, Anthony 2012

Technological Compatibility

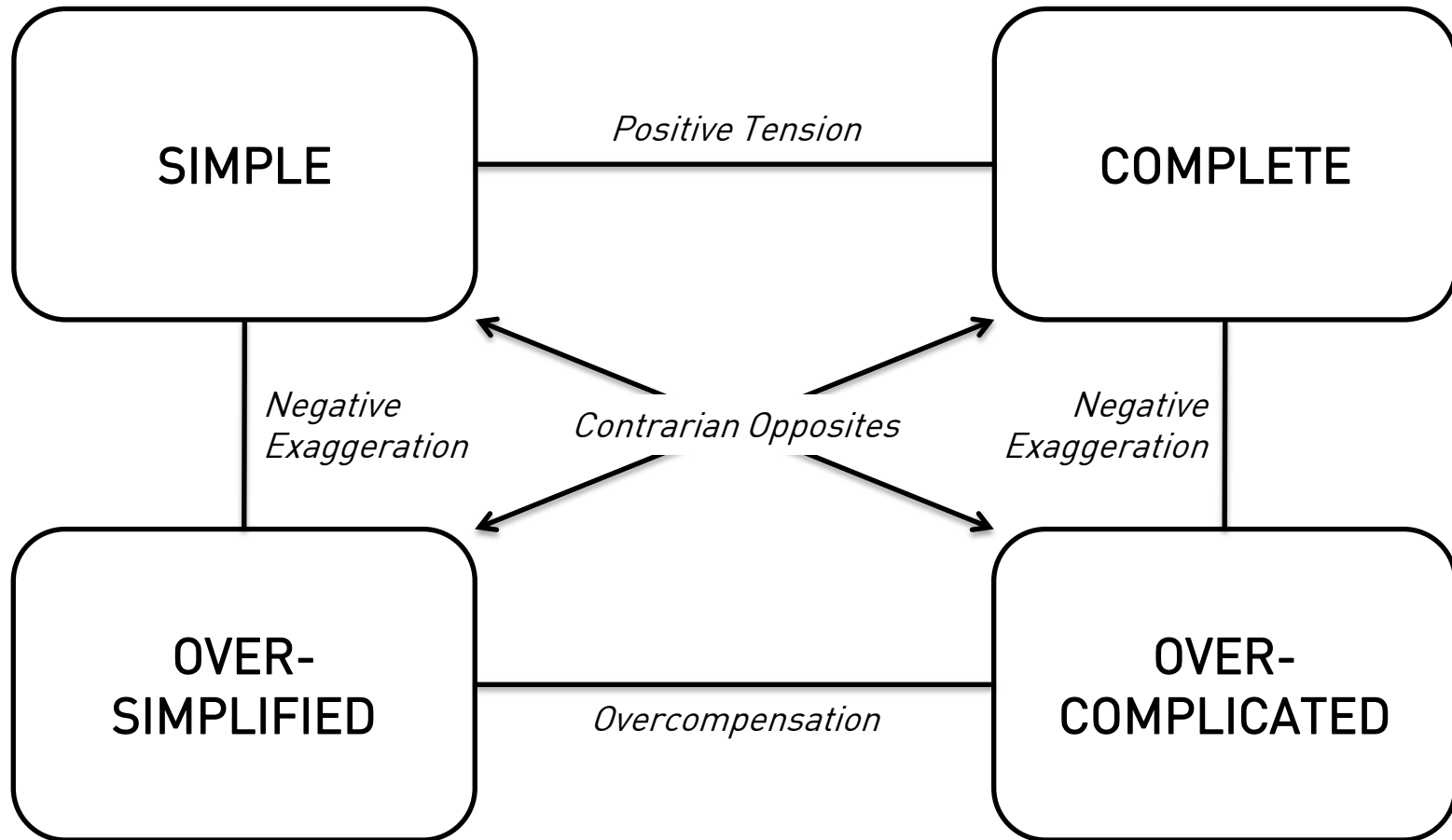
- Technological Infrastructure
- Habits & Previous Practices
- Maintenance

Socio-economic Compatibility

- Living Conditions
- Surroundings & Social Infrastructure
- Income Structures

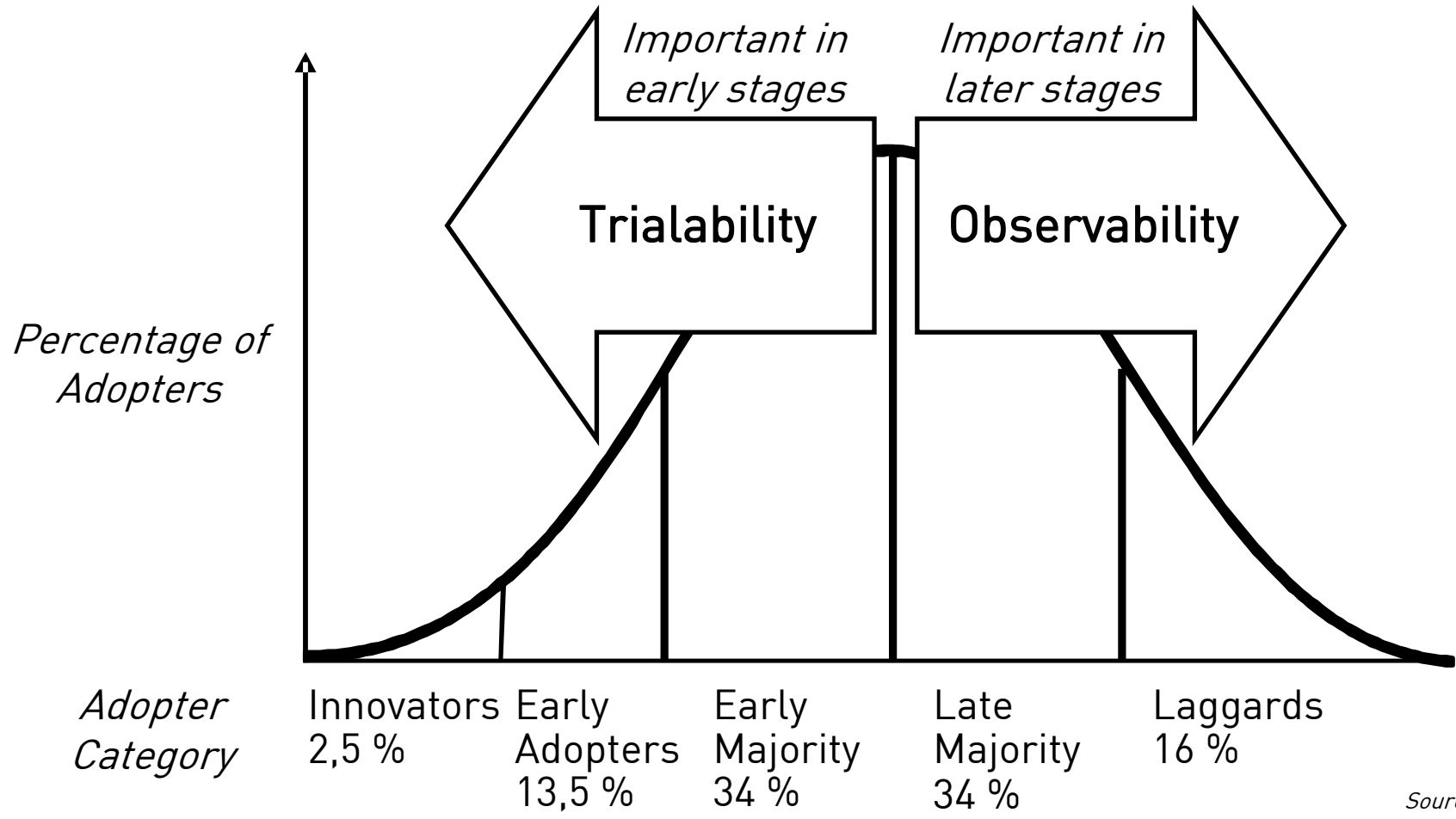
Cultural Compatibility

- Values & Beliefs
- Language
- Tastes & Preferences



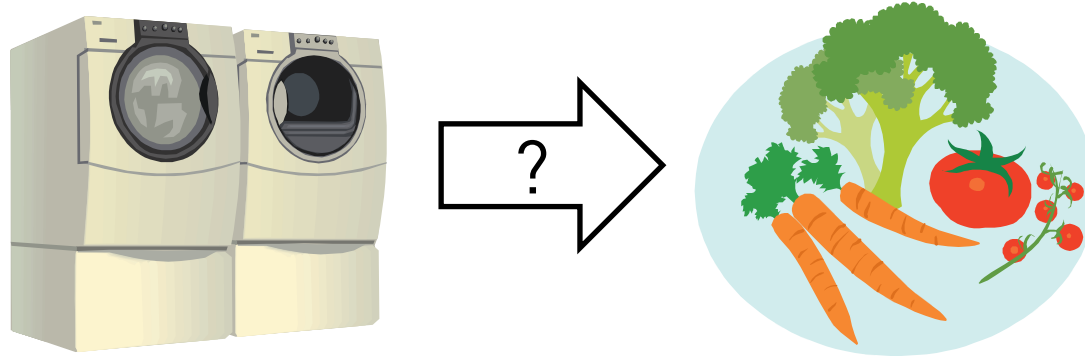
Simplicity to the front – complexity in the background.

Trialability an Observability



Source: Rogers 2003

Trying a New Idea May Lead to Re-Invention

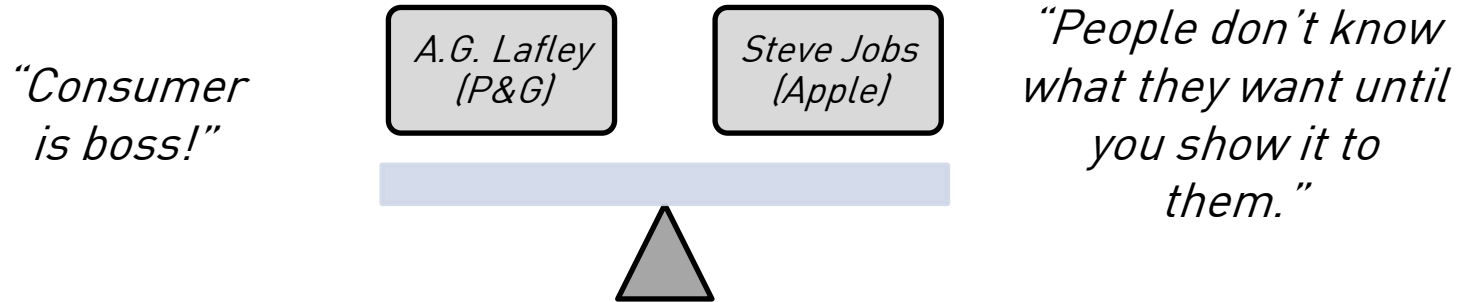


How would you react,
if your customers used your product in an entirely unexpected way?

Act like a Know-it-all: Instruct the customer how to use your product properly?

Act like a Prima Donna: Refuse to maintain and repair the product?

Act like a real Innovator: Adapt the product to the perceived needs of the customers?



1. Make your idea sticky

The advantage of your idea in a nutshell.

→ Relative Advantage & Simplicity (Easy to understand)

2. Prototype or perish

A prototype says more than a 1000 words.

→ Trialability & Observability

3. Adapt, adopt & improve

The way from prototype to finished product is long and stony.

→ Compatibility & Simplicity (Easy to use)

Thank you for your attention!



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