

What We Need are Standards in the Cloud

If a standard falls in the forest and there is nobody there to adopt it, is it still a standard?



My name is
Benjamin Black

And I have no standards.

Let's talk about something interesting,
instead:

Technology adoption.

Customer-centric view

Why adopt a technology?

Utility:

Does this solve my problem?

Interoperability:

Can I combine vendors+products
to solve my problem?

Independence:

Can I be totally free of
vendor lock-in?

Independence

Interoperability

Utility

These are not equal.

A hierarchy of needs.

Independence

Interoperability

Utility

Some problems need not go past **UTILITY**.

e.g., SQL (in reality)

Some problems can't achieve **UTILITY**
without **INTEROP.**

e.g., TCP/IP

The cycle:

1] Disruption.

MASSIVE UTILITY

(and a lot of imperfection)

Rapid adoption
(by definition)

2] Competition.

EXPLORATION

Endless variety

Goal: Discovery

Not just of
solutions.

But of the **complete** problem.

Many 'standards'

(meaning no standard)

The seeds of interop are sown.

We are currently in this stage.

3] Maturation.

FORMALIZATION

Our itch having been scratched, we turn to
less pressing matters.

Independence

Successful standards
formalize
what is already true.

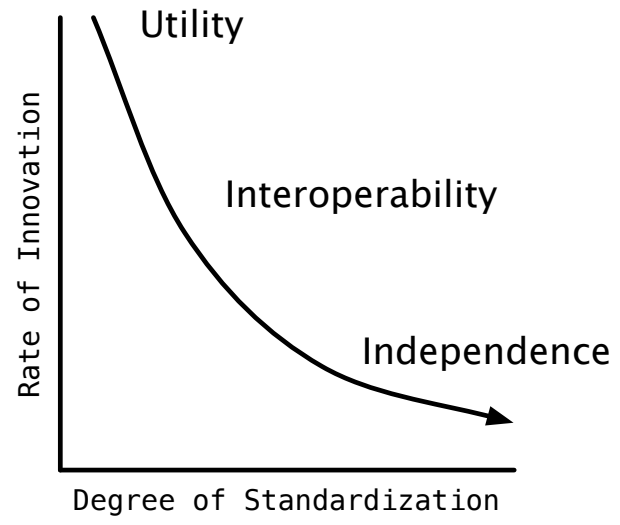
Standards are **side-effects**

of successful **technology**.

There are no successful standards absent
successful implementations.

All successful standards are
de facto standards.

TANSTAAFL



(the innovation moves elsewhere)

Standardize too soon, and you lock to the
wrong thing.

Unclear that it is even possible to
standardize 'too late'.

We have missed an important question:

What do we even mean by
'standard'?

Standard

Standard specification

Standard committee

Standard:

What everybody uses.

Utility + Disruption



Standard

Standard specification:

What someone hopes you'll use.

Interoperability



Standard specification

Standard committees:

The legislative branch.

Independence



Standard committee

Concerned with:

Licensing

Patent grants

Open process

Interoperable implementations

Open source

etc.

Special bonuses:

Politiks

Permanent seats

Preferential votes

Secret handshakes

etc.

If you don't achieve UTILITY...

Customers won't bother.

They want their problems solved.

Standard committees don't build.

We can only discover the right standards by
building and exploring.

To discover the right standards, we must
eschew standards.

Go do.