Foreword

One of the most important questions for innovative companies is knowing how to disseminate their innovations. Researchers provide entrepreneurs with substantial support in their search for this knowledge: For quite some time, they have been looking into the subject of diffusion of innovations, developing diffusion curves and deriving measures, e.g. related to marketing, that adequately accelerate the dissemination of new products at the right time. However, the marketing world is changing just as the products themselves are changing. A noteworthy phenomenon in this context is the fact that products are not necessarily used discretely but only if another consumer is using the same product. The telephone is a good example of this and recently a wide range of others have emerged: These include technologies like fax machines or the Internet with applications like dating platforms. Also for the latter it is interesting to know at which point it is necessary to invest in marketing measures to broaden the installed base of customers. Currently however, the issue starts with not even having adequate approaches to describe the diffusion of these goods.

The dissertation presented by Philipp Bell addresses this problem. It aims to devise a new diffusion model that incorporates the specific characteristics of system-effect goods. To achieve this goal, the author has made extensive enhancements to an existing model. Successfully so: for the different applications modeled, he is able to almost consistently achieve better results in describing the actual diffusion curve as well as in forecasting future developments.

These results make his work interesting for different audiences: theoreticians find a meaningful advancement of diffusion models that show its value not only on paper but also in terms of real data. As a result, the thesis is also very useful for practitioners: When they apply the models developed by Philipp Bell they are able to forecast at an earlier stage and more precisely how adoptions of their system-effect goods will develop and can consequently take the right measures.
In this respect, this thesis should attract a broad range of readers.

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