

NEEDING AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL VIEW OF INNOVATION



BBC NEWS | Technology | Peering beyond the technology hype

Interesting item in the BBC Magazine today on innovation and hype.

It is extremely difficult to predict which technologies will become part of everyday life in the future.

Some of the best known innovations, like the net, have swiftly become part of the furniture for millions, even though many said it would only benefit academic research and governments.

Similarly, few predicted text messaging would take off the way it has, with millions of thumbs across the globe twitching away every day.

Sometimes, according to Gartner technology analysts, a gadget, gizmo or technology just needs one good idea – a trigger – to catapult it into something that even dads have heard of.

But other times a whizzy idea sinks into oblivion, only

to be reborn when the other factors come into play.

It all actually reads like a hyped ad for Gartner – a consultancy firm. They claim to have a model for product adoption, for how innovation succeeds or fails.



It is actually a **description of a common pattern** and doesn't explain why contemporary consumer electronics works this way.

It is also mostly useful for marketing, with a short term view of things.

The archaeological view of innovation is both longer term and explanatory. I do like the overall point though –

Innovation usually occurs at the margins and in ways that run counter to expectations.

It is a network effect.

This is one of the themes of my new book – the last few days I have been looking again at the adoption of agriculture.