



eLearn²⁰⁰⁴INTERNATIONAL
World Summit Edinburgh 2004
18th - 19th February 2004

Standards for e-learning: Is there a future?

Jon Mason

jmason@educationau.edu.au

Content



Process

Standards for e-learning: Is there a future?

More importantly:

... *What standards? & Why standards?*

... *& Who will develop them?*

Why?

- Standards are a natural artifact of any human society
- Communities of practice develop standards (& conventions, protocols, fashions, etc)

But ...

Standards are misunderstood

- As a means for corporate dominance in the marketplace
- As a means for government regulatory control
- As an encroachment on personal freedom of expression

Standards are misunderstood

... & in the eLearning world ...

the province of techo's!

How to model the problem space?

- Processes & Functions
- Concepts
- Components
- Services
- Frameworks
- Sustainable infrastructure
- Use Cases

Critical Uncertainties



Acceptance and adoption of technology in society

High acceptance
Widespread adoption
Technology empowers
Aligns with human needs
Driven by society

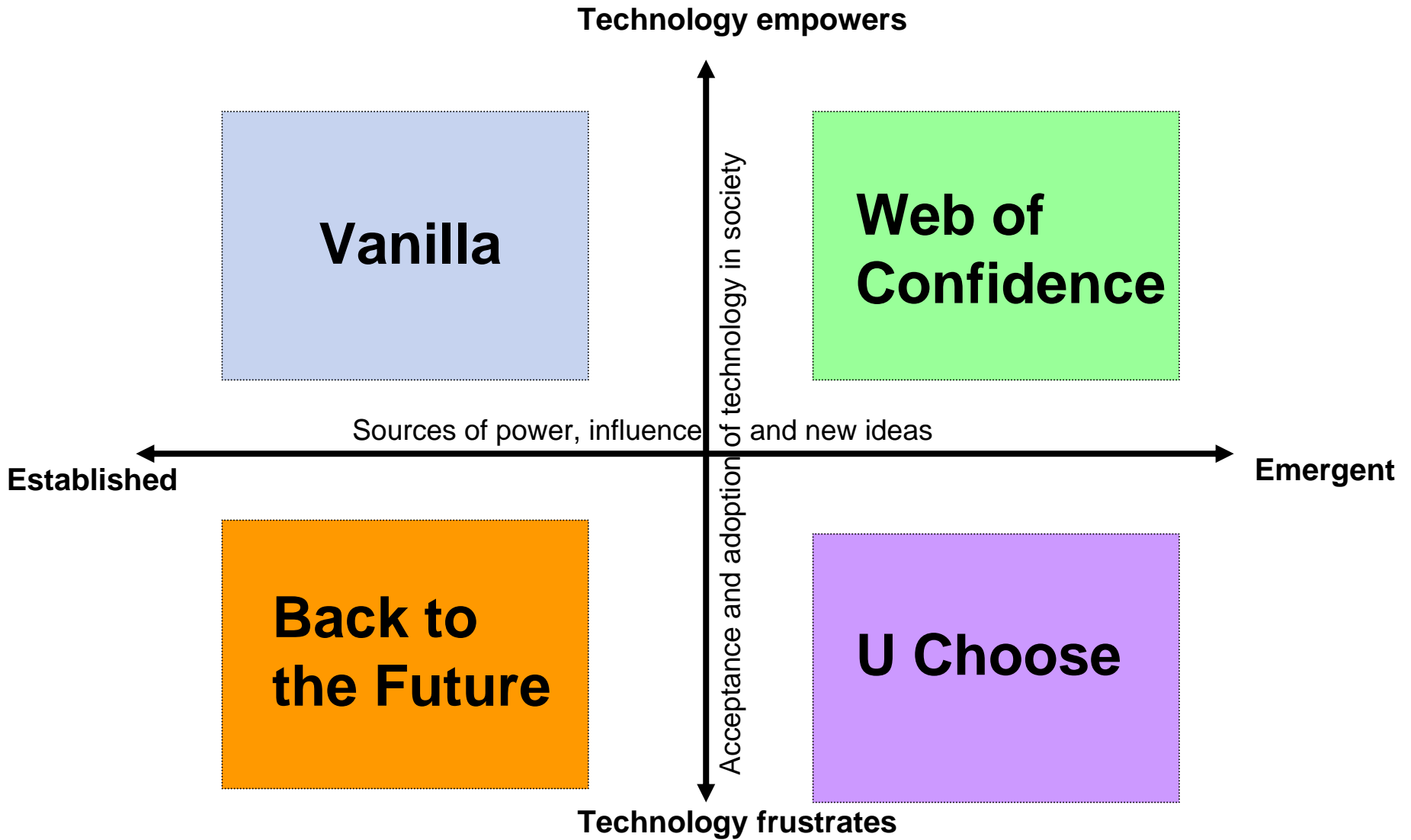
Partial acceptance
Patchy adoption
Technology frustrates
Runs counter to needs
Driven by technology



Sources of power, influence and new ideas

Conventional
Institutionalized
Centralized
Established

Self-organized
Diffused
Decentralized
Emergent

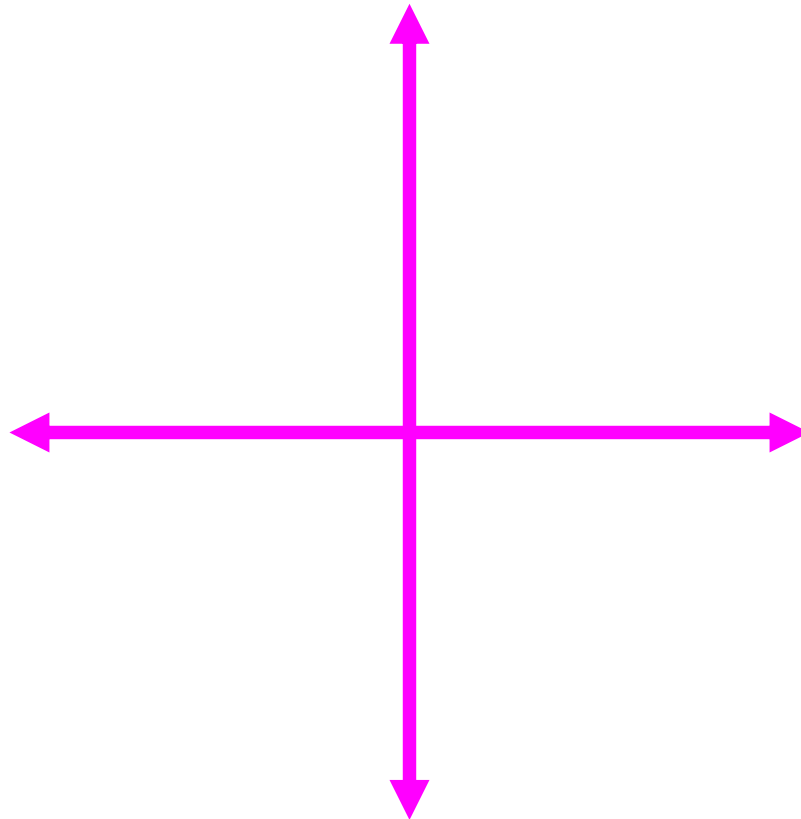


Technology Empowers

Established
Power

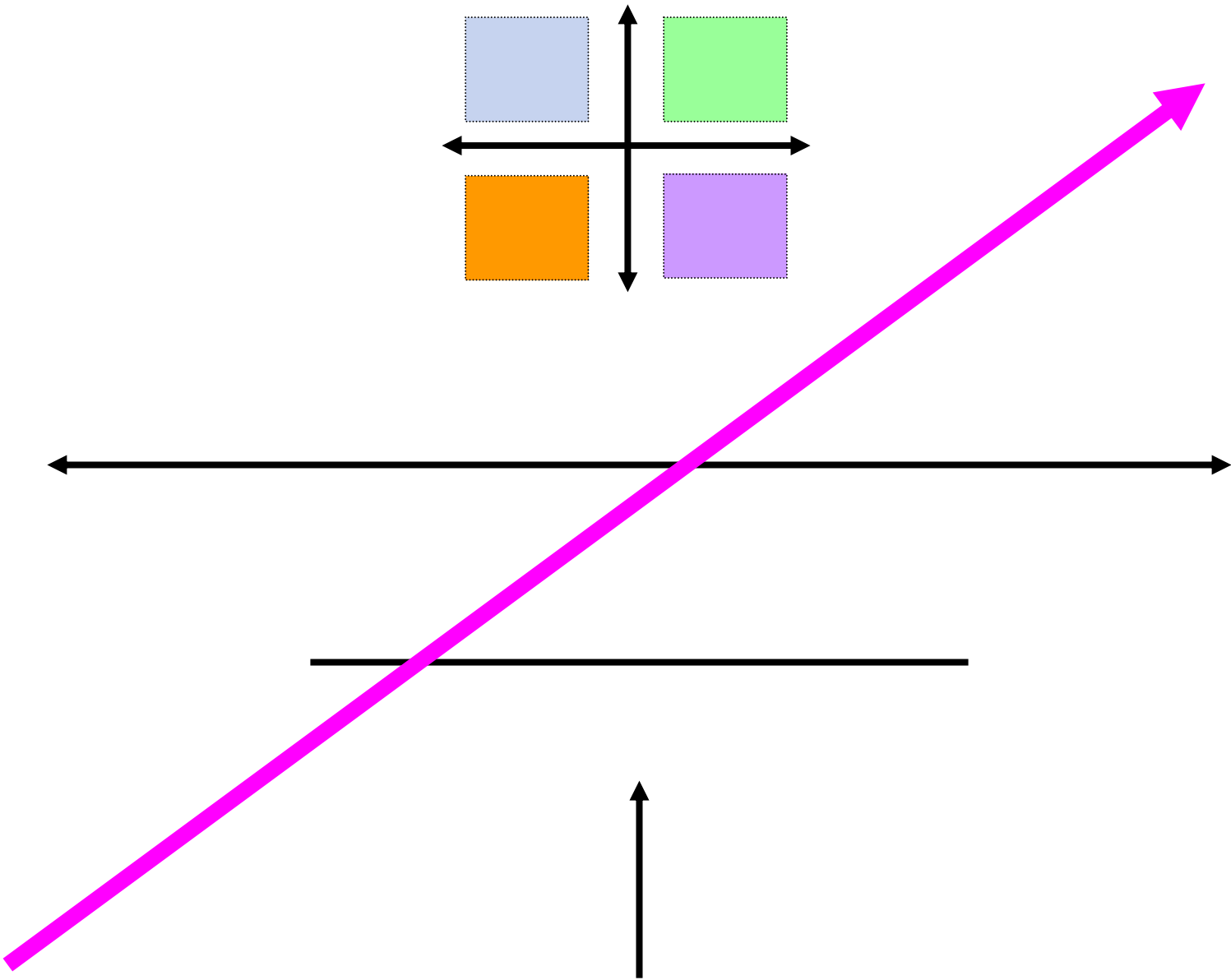
Emergent
Power

Technology Frustrates



What is common to each scenario?

*All will utilise
standards in various forms!*



Other Tensions

Communities of Practice

Formal



Informal

Content



Process

Technology



Pedagogy

Boundaries

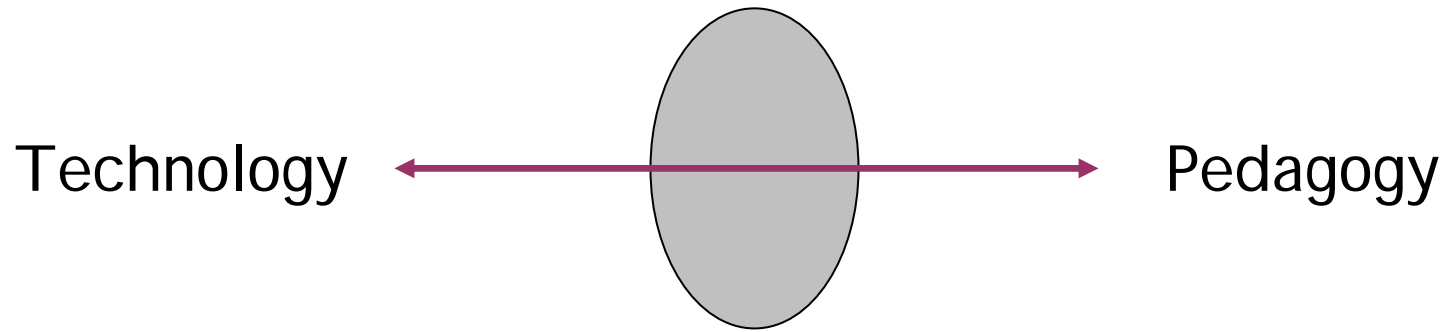


Networks

Continuities



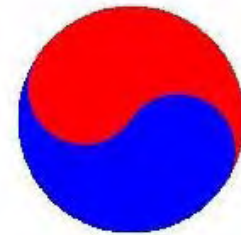
Discontinuities



- No clean boundary between technical & pedagogical issues
 - e.g., metadata & 'soft' infrastructure
- Interoperability
 - semantic
 - cultural
 - political
 - syntactic
 - technical

Terminology

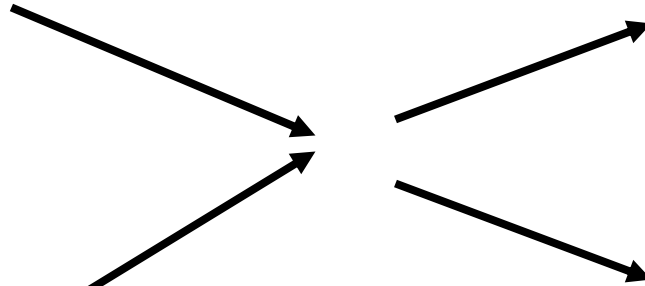
**Purpose-built
e-learning standards**



**Standards harnessed
through innovation in
e-learning**

e-learning

Standards



• What creates value in the information economy?

• Who creates it?

• How is it created?



Standards:

utilize & define boundaries

enable networks

facilitate development of systems

Questions – What if ...

“The paomnnehil pweor of the hmuan mnid. Aoccdrnig to a rsereearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttær in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a total msees and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mind deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe.”

- personal email correspondence, Aug 2003

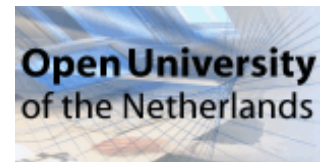
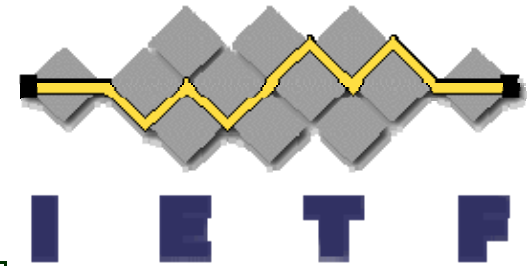
What Technology?

- information & communications
- nano-
- bio-
- a fusion?

Many technologies will shape society's acceptance or otherwise



Who





Who Else?



United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



Education for All

EFA Home



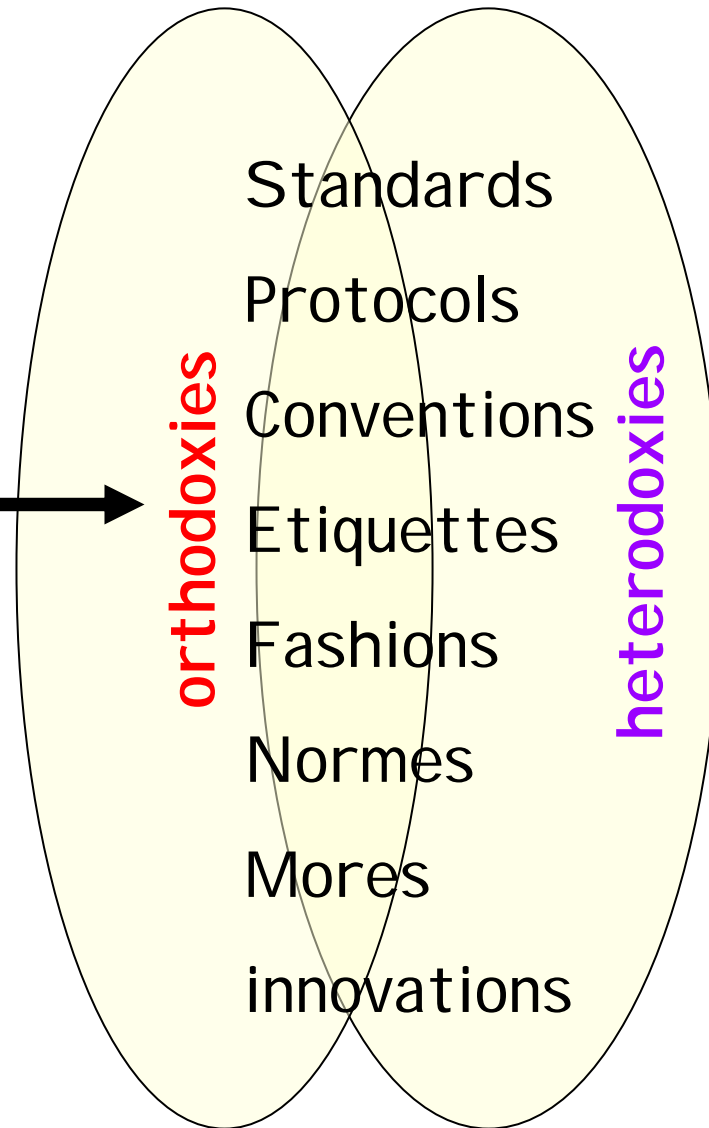
eEurope

Standards that make eEurope tick !

ALIC

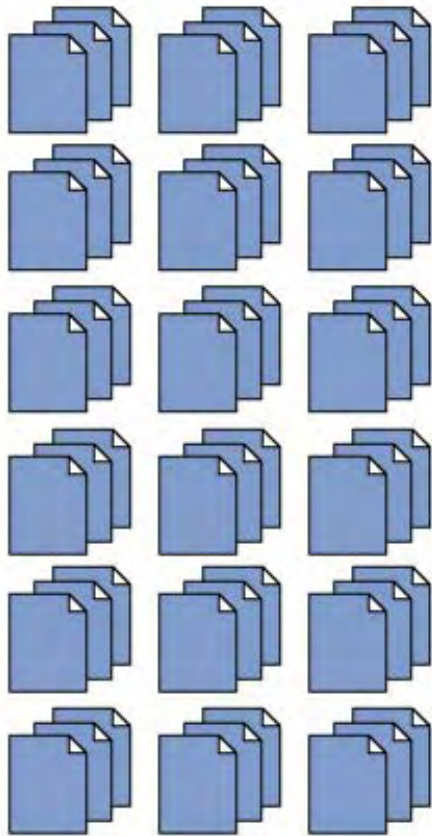
Advanced Learning Infrastructure Consortium / 先進學習基礎協議會

Communities of
Practice

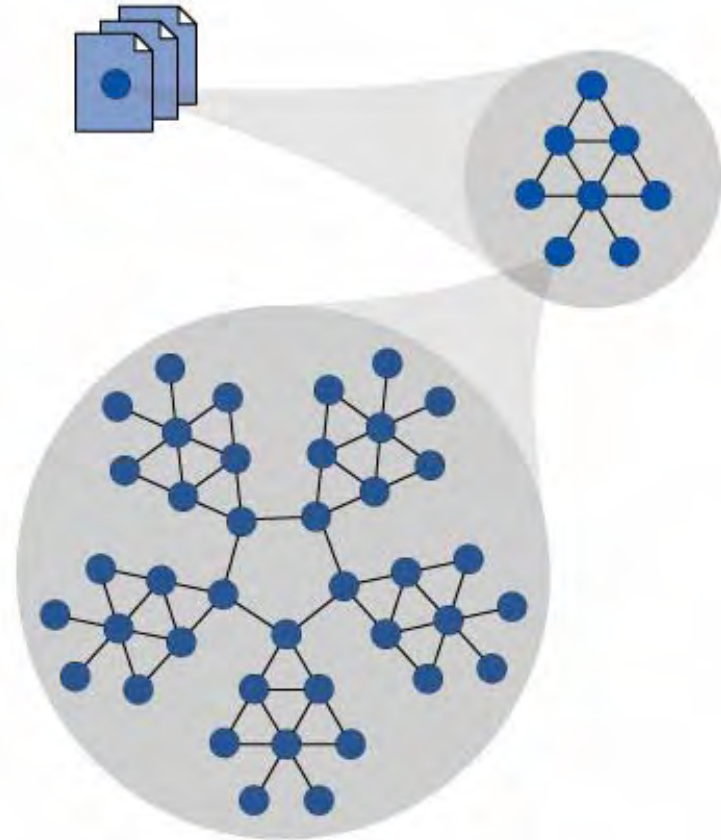


Conceptual Challenges

- **What is content?**
 - new data-types & object-types constantly appearing
- **Boundaries**
 - Where are the boundaries between content, context, & learning activities?
 - What are **digital objects** & what are **digital collections**?
 - Where are the boundaries between data, information, & knowledge?
- **Modeling knowledge**
 - extending the scope of metadata assignment & use



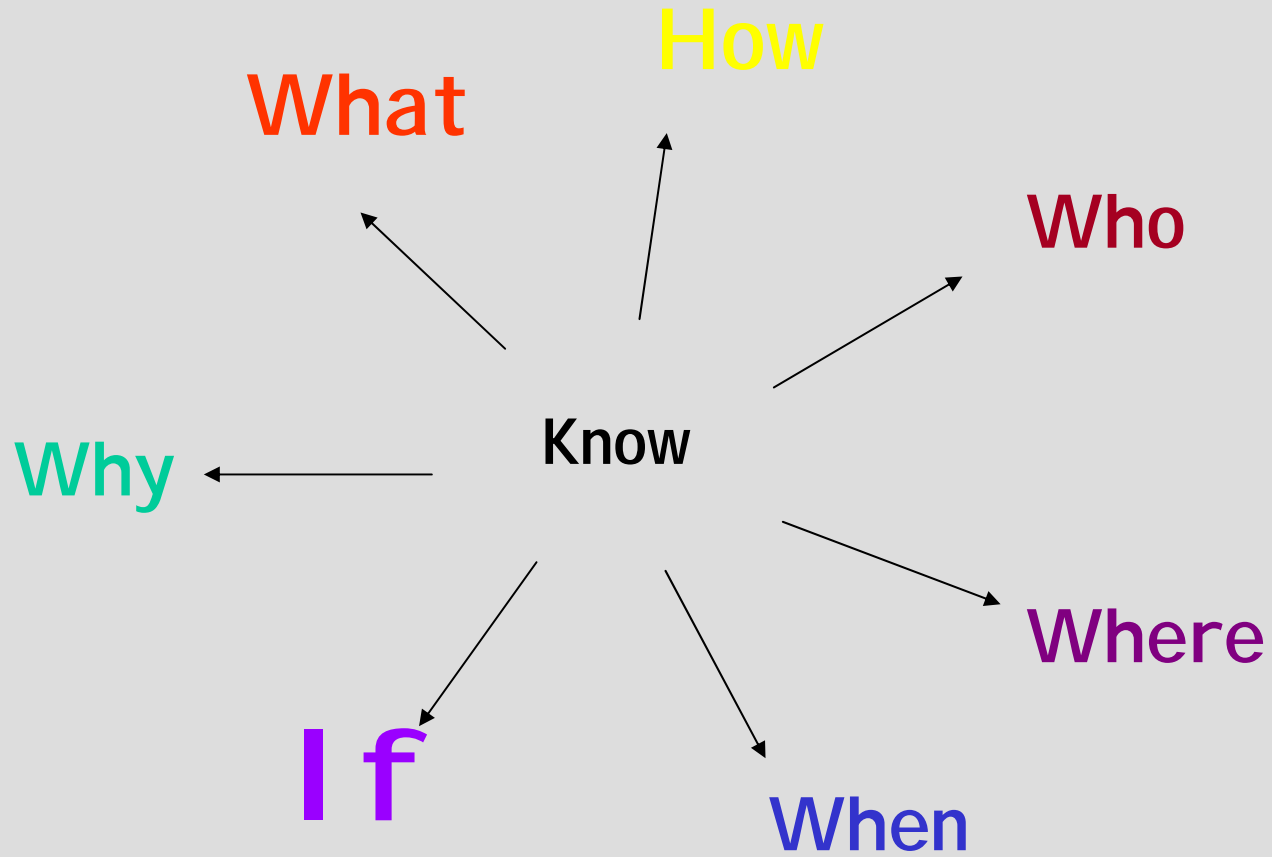
Library makers/maintainers
organize objects, but don't need
to look 'inside the black box'



Learning object makers/
maintainers organize and
interrogate objects and thus need
to look 'inside the black box' and
attend to internal object relations

Will a Knowledge Economy Emerge?

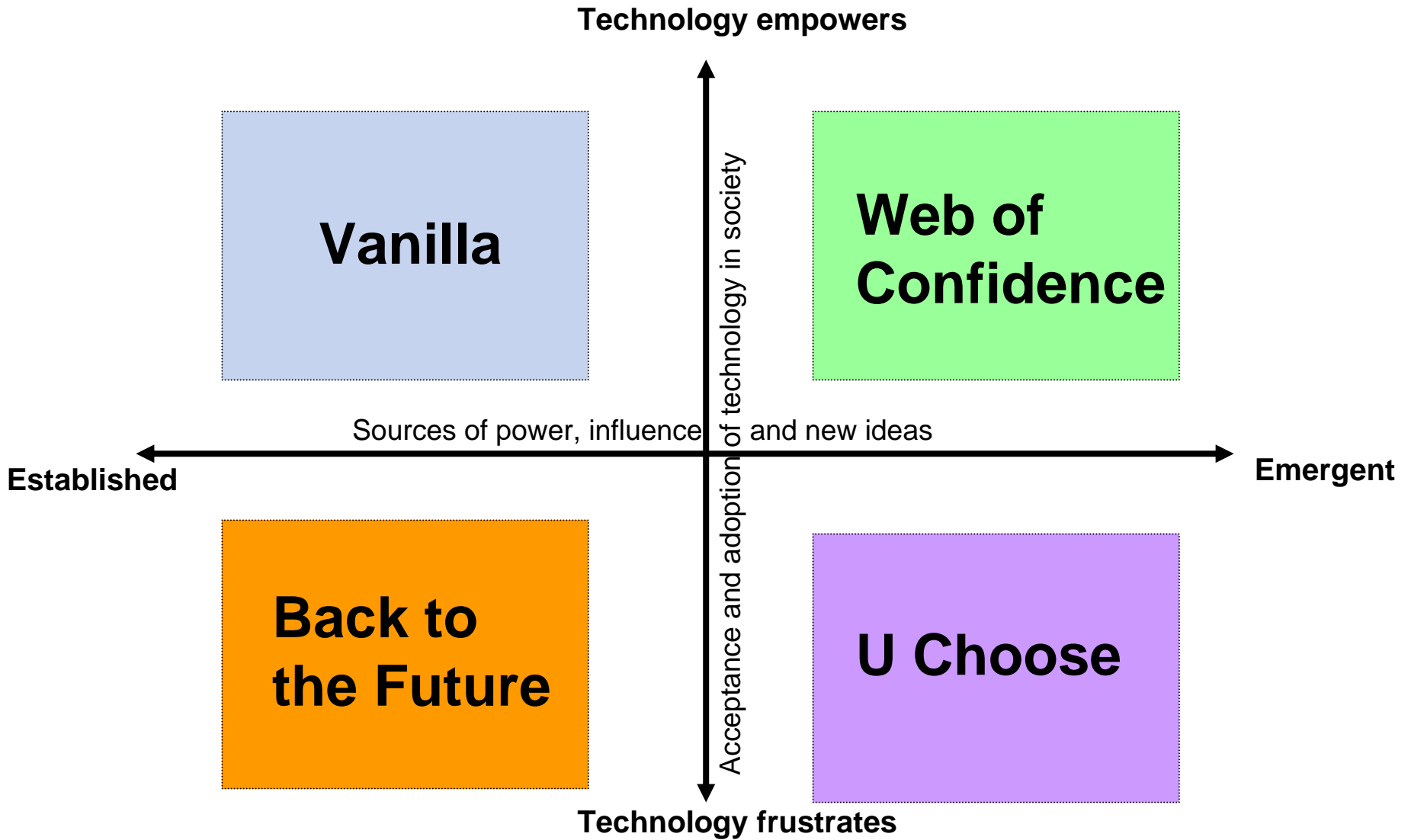
**Is e-learning meshing with
knowledge management?**



Interfaces

Boundaries by another name

**A critical success factor in
technology adoption**



What does each scenario indicate about e-learning standards?

- **Back to the Future**

a content-delivery-centric dumbing down
(‘know-what’)

- **UChoose**

portlets, wikis, weblogs, e-portfolios

- **Virtually Vanilla**

blended dumbing down, content-access, competencies
(‘do-what’ & ‘know-what’)

- **Web of Confidence**

‘access management’ solved, hi-trust systems