

Faculty Adoption:

Getting everyone on board with your learning management system

I have this learning management system and now I have to use it?

A white paper examining faculty adoption of the learning management system.

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ABSTRACT

The use of a learning management system (LMS) can increase student engagement, improve classroom management, increase collaboration, and provide anytime/anywhere learning. In 2018, the learning management systems market is expected to grow by 23% to around \$7.8 billion.¹

A study conducted by Dahlstrom, Brooks, and Bichsel indicated the LMS is underused in higher education, affecting financial and human resources departments. The report also indicated faculty are underutilizing the LMS with 56% of students requesting increased use.² Tight budgets in the higher education sector demand universities are good stewards of their funds.

Students are also becoming more tech-savvy and are seeking out colleges that use technology. They are more diverse than ever, and seek alternative ways of attending college. Lack of adoption among faculty affects these tech-savvy and diverse student populations. In turn, lack of adoption affects the college's fiscal responsibilities by not meeting the needs of diverse students.³

This whitepaper uses Roger's Theory of Diffusion to examine adoption factors, and will suggest resources that help with any obstacles impeding adoption among faculty.⁴

¹Pappas, C. (2015). The top LMS statistics and facts for 2015 you need to know. Retrieved March 10, 2017, from <https://elearningindustry.com/top-lms-statistics-and-facts-for-2015>

²Dahlstrom, E., Brooks, D., and Bichsel, J. (2014). The current ecosystem of learning management systems in higher education: Student, faculty, and IT perspectives. Research report. Louisville, CO: ECAR, September 2014. Available from <http://www.educause.edu/ecar>

³Johnson, L., Adams Becker, S., Estrada, V., Freeman, A. (2014). NMC horizon report: 2014 higher education edition. Austin, Texas: The New Media Consortium. Retrieved from <http://www.nmc.org/pdf/2014-nmc-horizon-report-he-FN.pdf>

⁴Rogers, E. M. (2003). Diffusion of innovations (5th ed.). New York: The Free Press.



Introduction

Adoption of the learning management system can affect areas of higher education such as student engagement, classroom management, and online courses. Likewise, lack of adoption can impede the success of using the tools available to higher education. This whitepaper will explore Roger's Theory of Diffusion use with adoption among faculty.

D2L believes when one faculty adopts the technology, another faculty member who might resist will soon follow. Students, in turn, will use the platform for classes and are usually not the issue when adopting technology.

Roger's Theory of Diffusion

Roger's Theory of Diffusion has been used throughout the years to determine how technologies are adopted in a society. Diffusion is defined as "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system".⁵ The definition contains four elements of diffusion including the innovation, communication channels, time, and social systems, each playing an important role in higher education.

Innovation

"An innovation is an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption".⁶

Compatibility, relative advantage, complexity, trialability, and observability are the attributes used to define how technology is diffused through a society.⁷ For this paper, the innovation could be any of the tools in Brightspace.

Attributes of Innovation	Definition
Compatibility	How the innovation fits within the adopter's needs, values, and past experiences.
Relative Advantage	The perceived improvement over the previous technology used.
Complexity	The degree of assumed difficulty of an innovation.
Trialability	The ability to experiment with an innovation before adoption.
Observability	The ability to observe a technology before adoption.

⁵Rogers, E. M. (2003). Diffusion of innovations (5th ed.). New York: The Free Press.

⁶Ibid

⁷Rogers, E. M. (2003). Diffusion of innovations (5th ed.). New York: The Free Press.



Communication Channels

“The process by which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding”.⁸

As we know, communication can take various forms, such as face-to-face, or via mediums such as television, radio, newspapers, and the internet. These mediums have become more prevalent with the increased use of technology and can send positive or negative messages.

Lack of communication or negative communication will hinder how fast or if a technology is adopted. Having a group of peers to positively communicate the use of the tools can help to increase adoption. This group should include those considered early adopters to help influence those who have not yet been convinced how the tools can improve the daily routine.

Time

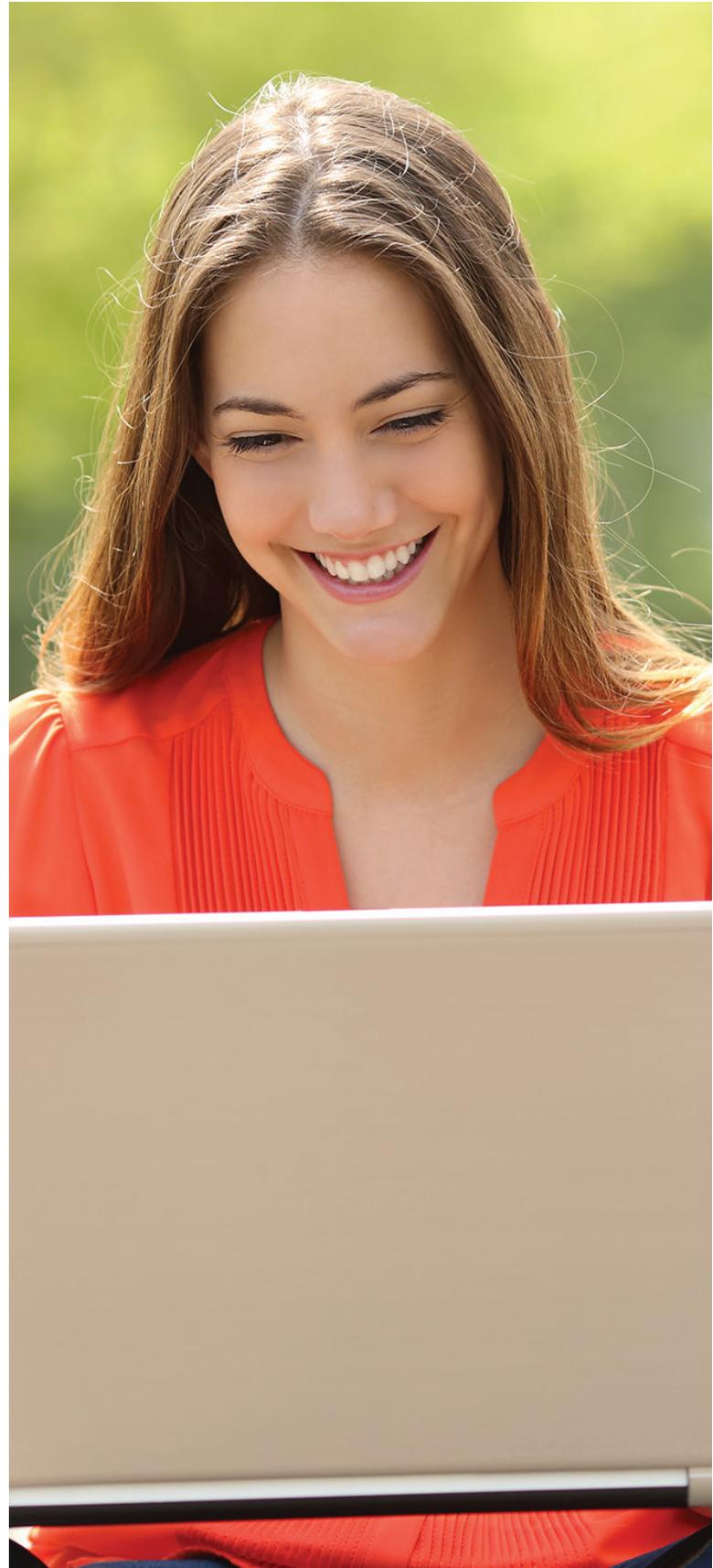
One of the most ignored elements in the adoption process is time. One dimension of the time element is the innovation-decision process defined as the process when the user gains knowledge about a product and decides to adopt or not adopt. Roger's Theory of Diffusion⁹ includes the five stages of knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation.

- Knowledge: The stage where the user becomes aware of the product and is gaining more knowledge about a product's functions.
- Persuasion: The stage where the user becomes favorable or non-favorable toward the product.
- Decision: The actual activity of adopting or not adopting a product.
- Implementation: After a user has decided to adopt and begins using the product.
- Confirmation: The stage where a user confirms the adoption of the product for the positive or negative. If positive, the user continues to use the product. If negative, they may discontinue use.

Increasing the amount of time available affects both faculty and students. For faculty, there is a large amount of time spent up front to create courses, but this does save time after the initial setup, allowing them to concentrate on their students.

Courses that are available 24/7 allow non-traditional students the ability to attend college, and students can view course material and lectures more than once, thus possibly increasing success rates and retention.

⁹Rogers, E. M. (2003). Diffusion of innovations (5th ed.). New York: The Free Press.





Social Systems

The final element of the Theory of Diffusion, social systems, is the unit or group with a common goal who together work to solve a problem.¹⁰ Key roles in a social system consist of opinion leaders and change agents.

- **Opinion Leaders:** Have availability to communicate externally and it depends on how their peers view their status within the organization. They also are often early adopters of new technology.
- **Change Agents:** Individuals who work to influence the adopter in the direction the organization deems desirable. They are usually more respected by their peers.

Rogers defined five different levels of adopters during the adoption process. The levels consist of innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. These adoption levels typically follow an S-curve pattern.

¹⁰Rogers, *Diffusion of innovations*

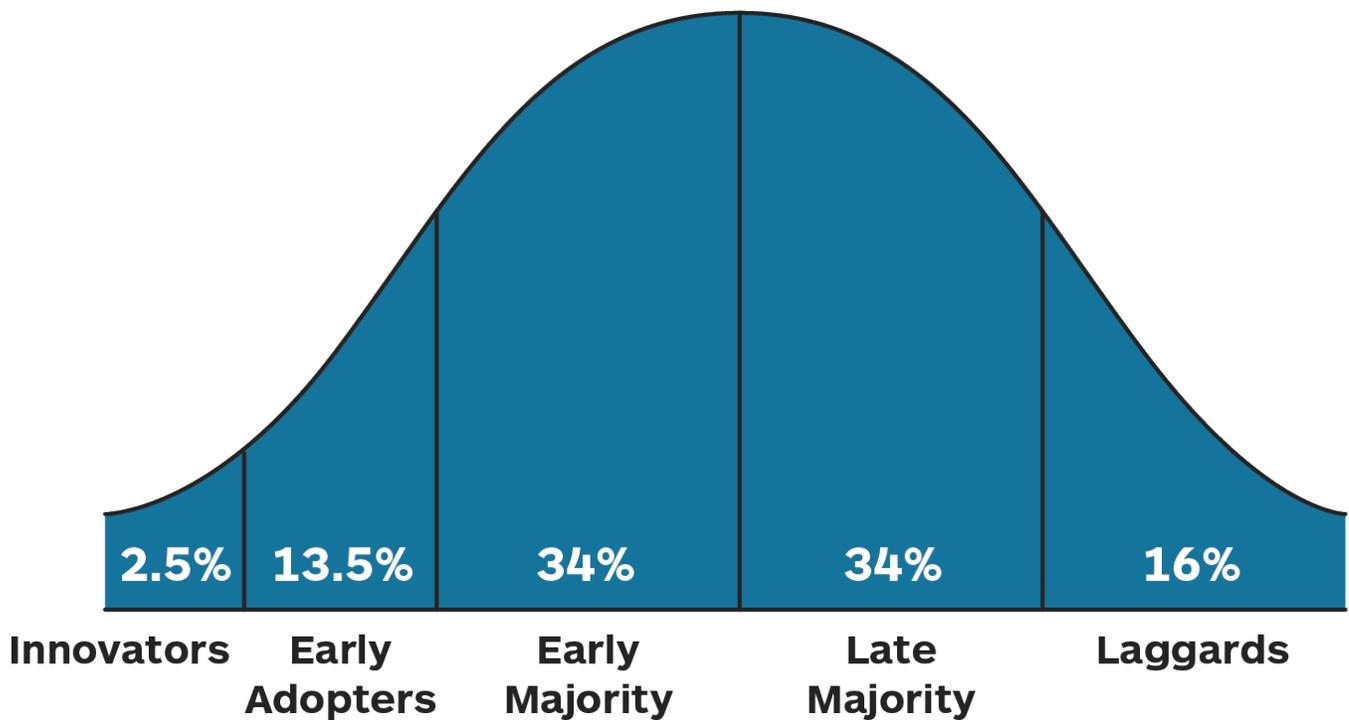


Figure 1: Adopter categorization on the basis of innovativeness (Source: Diffusion of Innovations, fifth edition by Everett M. Rogers. Copyright (c) 2003 by The Free Press.

Determining these levels in higher education can aid in the adoption process.

Adopter Level	Definition
Innovators – 2.5%	Visionaries, more tolerant of risk.
Early Adopters – 13.5%	Tend to be more respected by their peers, willing to take a risk.
Early Majority – 34%	Will adopt after successful adoption by early adopters. Usually know them personally.
Late Majority – 34%	Tend to be more skeptical than the early majority and will adopt after them.
Laggards – 16%	Often resistant to change and may never adopt.

Determining who the opinion leaders and change agents are can be more valuable to adoption than education technology leaders or teaching and learning staff. Faculty are more apt to listen to their peers who experience the same daily struggles.

¹¹Rogers, *Diffusion of innovations*

Obstacles to Faculty Adoption

Higher education institutions may face obstacles to faculty adopting the LMS. Obstacles to adopting technology can include:

Obstacle	Definition	Solutions/Resources
Lack of time	Faculty have many duties other than teaching courses, such as research, and for medical schools, running clinics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize the time savings after the initial work of creating the content. • Creation of master courses.
Faculty resistance	Veteran tenured faculty have no desire to adopt new technology when so close to retirement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with a mentor to help enable those who are resistant.
Fear	Faculty are afraid of being replaced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect with a mentor to help relieve some of the fears.
Training	A lack of quality training supplied to faculty.	<p>Fee-based trainings are listed below; more information can be found at: https://learn.brightspace.com/.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Training – Fee-based training broken out by administrators, instructors and course designers. • Certificate Training – Fee-based training broken out by the Complete Brightspace Teaching and Learning Certificate Program, Learning Environment Developing Course Materials Certification, Learning Environment Building Assessments and Grading Learners Certification, Learning Environment Communication and Engagement Certification. • Private Training – Fee-based live in-person or virtual training broken out by Learning Environment Administration Tools, Learning Environment Instructor Tools, Learning Environment Rubrics and Competencies, Learning Environment Best Practices, Learning Environment Analytics Essentials, Learning Environment Train-the-Trainer. <p>Training offered at no fee include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brightspace Tutorial Channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLSxTdOzKAFOCzjXav1aCRQ. • Brightspace Community at https://community.brightspace.com/. • Online Web Help Resource Center at https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/le/-/all/le_intro.htm
Lack of Support	Leadership does not support those responsible for running the platform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate leadership on D2L/Brightspace • Business value achievement process (see below) • Quarterly business reviews



Adoption Resources

Customer Success Managers

Our Customer Success Managers (CSM) can help customers with a business value achievement (BVA) plan to help align the use of the platform with the organization's strategic goals.

The BVA process consists of conducting a process of plan, achieve, and measure. Planning involves helping the customer determine one to three measurable organizational objectives that align with D2L. Determining the objectives is followed by deciding the stakeholders affected and their key drivers.

Following this, the CSM will determine the D2L alignment with this objective. Obstacles to meeting these objectives are also reviewed to determine how to aid the organization in overcoming those obstacles. Success criteria are then put in place to help achieve the identified objectives. A business review (BR) is conducted to ascertain the achievement of those objectives. Contact your CSM to discuss conducting the BVA process.



Advisory Consulting Services

Advisory Consulting Services (ACS) works to maximize your success by focusing on strategic initiatives, typically longer-term projects, that align to the mission, vision, and goals of the institution. This can include on-going, monthly monitoring engagements.

The ACS team partners with the Customer Success team to help our clients achieve their success goals. Some of the available consulting topics provided by this group include:

- Strategic Planning and Program Management
- Organizational Readiness and Engagement
- Instructor Adoption Services
- Training Plan Creation/Optimization
- Assessment Practices Planning
- Outcomes Planning Service
- Competency-Based Education Service
- Communication and Marketing Strategies
- Return of Investment/Value of Investment Studies
- Digital Strategy
- Preparing for a Data Strategy
- Preparing for Data Governance
- Courseware Services and/or Training

You can reach Advisory Consulting Services through your Customer Success Manager or Account Manager.

Technical Account Managers

A Technical Account Manager (TAM) is a paid resource that acts as a trusted advisor to D2L's premium support customers, and a single point of contact for organizing communication, researching questions, managing platform updates, providing technical assistance, and coordinating project support. Contact your Account Manager to receive information on TAM services.

Account Managers

Account Managers (AMs) are a point of contact for clients regarding new solutions, products and services. They also engage in product demos, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, roadmap reviews and alignment, and business reviews.





Support

This team provides our clients with quality and timely client-centered support, contributing to the daily success of mission-critical teaching and learning activities. We provide support for clients from all verticals who are using our enterprise suite of eLearning web-based software.

Our capabilities and responsibilities include:

- Acting as the client's first point of contact
- Assisting clients on how to use our system and answer any questions they may have
- Engaging the appropriate skill set to resolve various issues
- Ensuring clients receive important information in a timely and professional manner
- Acting as an escalation point and advocate for clients

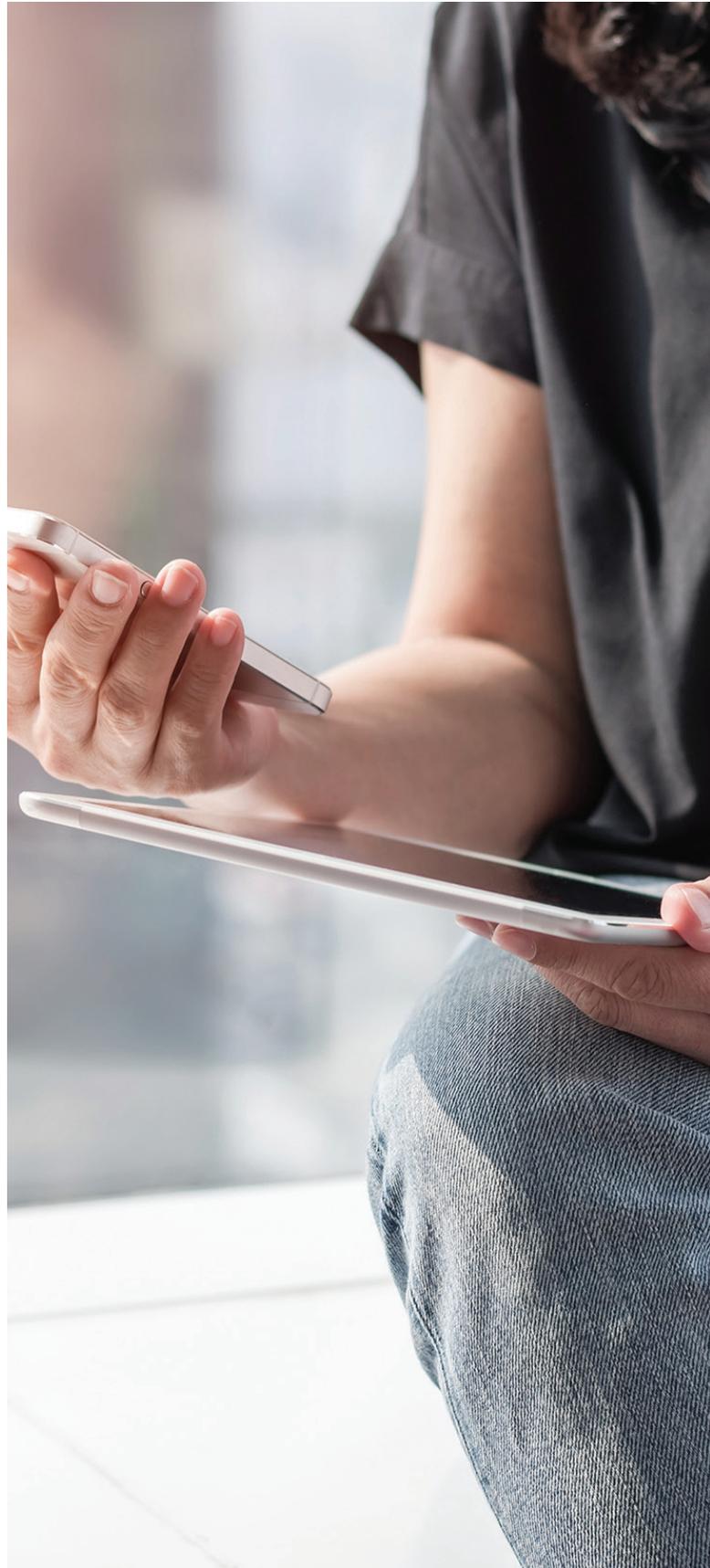
Brightspace Community

The Brightspace community is a resource for technical documentation, video tutorials, blogs, discussions, and connection with other Brightspace users.

The community can be reached at community.brightspace.com.

Conclusion

Improving faculty adoption can improve student engagement, classroom management, and online courses. Contact your CSM to begin determining adoption needs and improving your adoption rate.



About D2L

D2L is the software leader that makes learning experiences better. The company's cloud-based platform, Brightspace, is easy to use, flexible, and smart. With Brightspace, organizations can personalize the experience for every learner to deliver real results. The company is a world leader in learning analytics: its platform predicts learner performance so that organizations can take action in real-time to keep learners on track. Brightspace is used by learners in higher education, K-12, and the enterprise sector, including the Fortune 1000. D2L has operations in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, Brazil, and Singapore.

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