Introduction
Most everyone wishes to avoid being on “the bleeding edge” of technology. But whether you want to be an “early adopter” or a more conservative “mass market” buyer, it’s important to have a Technology Plan to avoid getting swamped by a “technology wave” or get caught in the “obsolescence backwater”. Here’s a quick primer to help you “stay ahead of the (technology) curve”.

According to the Rogers Adoption/Innovation Curve this is the breakdown of how innovations diffuse through the population:

While there is nothing especially “wrong” with adopting technology at any particular stage, it’s important to have a philosophy and a technology plan that matches the organization’s business objectives. However, I would advocate that for most businesses, the best range is somewhere from Early Adopters to Early Majority. The exact “spot” is determined by business needs balanced against the technology cost. Innovators pay the highest price but benefit from it soonest and for the longest time. Mass Market buyers (or “Laggards” as Rogers describes them) pay the lowest price but benefit for the shortest time before the next innovation wave comes along.

Another way to look at this however is indeed much like a real wave.
If you envision technology adoption as a “wave”, then of course the worst thing that could happen is for you to allow the wave to crash over you - wait so long that your technology is very old and obsolete and requiring a herculean effort to recover.

But surely the 2nd worst thing would be the perpetual purgatory of trying to paddle up the inside of the curling wave. When in this state, you are spending a great deal of money simply to stay in the same bad situation and, again, only a herculean effort will get you back up to the top of the wave.

It is far better and requires less financial effort to get on the wave as it is rising and then expend just enough (financial) effort to remain at the top and “ride the wave”. Furthermore, riding the wave achieves the best benefits for the organization:

1. Potentially competitive advantages over competitors either still trying to “catch the wave” or “behind the curve” (getting swamped).
2. An optimum daily computing experience for the typical user (productivity).
3. Better staff empowerment and morale.

So, given the above examples and benefits, the question becomes, “How do you catch the wave and ride it?”
The answer is TECHNOLOGY PLANNING. Just as you might have a business plan that looks forward 3 months, 1 year, and 5 years setting corresponding goals and plans, you should have a technology plan that helps you achieve those business goals.

We recommend developing a technology plan with the following characteristics:

1. Look forward (at least) 3 years and estimate the simple technology refresh expenses that you will have (servers, workstations, printers, copiers, phone systems, A/V equipment) in each year.
2. Plan for the technology needed to pursue business initiatives, above and beyond the simple refresh expenses.
3. Endeavor to “spread the cost” as evenly as possible to avoid painful spikes in expenditure.
4. Re-visit the plan at least annually and more often if your organization is growing or changing rapidly.

All ENTRUST service plans include Technology Planning as a built-in part of our service. Our technologists are skilled and ready to help you catch and ride the technology wave, year after year.

**ONE MORE THING:** There are circumstances where being an innovator is the right choice just as there are circumstances where being a putative “laggard” (mass market) adopter is absolutely the right strategy. Your technology advisor needs to have the knowledge and experience and be enough “in touch” with your business goals to help you know when those circumstances apply. ENTRUST is proud to have “business savvy” technologists well able to guide and advise you.

Learn more about ENTRUST: [www.entrust.us.com](http://www.entrust.us.com)
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