

A Checklist: Assessing New Technologies

Characteristics

Is the technology a radical departure or an improvement upon an existing method?
Is it one of many potential solutions, or does it stand alone as a unique solution?
Is the technology complex or self-evident? Is it obvious or obscure? Does implementation seem to be straightforward or challenging?
Could you add your own ideas to greatly enhance the technology's value?

Attributes

What are the important performance measures in the target application? How does the technology stack up against all those measures?
What additional features is it likely to offer? What are the corresponding key user benefits?
Are other incidental benefits likely (e.g. size or form factor, user relationship, reliability)?
Will users find the new technology easy or challenging to adopt?

Source and History

Who, or what organization, originated the idea? What are their credentials and track record?
Does the originator know the target application space well? Are they experts in other application domains?
For how long has the technology been known? Has it already been commercialized for any applications? If so, which ones?

Competitive Landscape

What other solutions have been commercialized for the target application? What are each of their characteristics and attributes?
What other technologies (commercialized or not) could be applied to the target application? What are each of their characteristics and attributes?
If commercialized, how well would the technology in question be positioned?

Intellectual Property

Is there existing IP that can be accessed? If not, how might the new technology be protected?
Will you have complete freedom to operate, or will certain other technologies have to be licensed?
Are the necessary licenses likely to be available under mutually acceptable terms?
Can your company develop a strong IP position of its own?

Development Status

What's the stage of development (e.g. idea, proof of principle, product concept, prototype)?
What evidence of performance against key measures exists? Is it compelling and credible?
If you need proof in your own hands, can you develop it in-house or using a third party quickly?

Commercialization Pathways

What capabilities and investment must be applied to move things forward? How and when can these resources be brought to bear? Does your firm have the wherewithal to do so?
Is the technology broadly applicable? Might it serve other applications? Could your company exploit those applications directly, or could you generate incremental revenue by licensing-out?
