

3. The extent to which perceptions of behavioral control realistically reflect actual control.¹⁶

The relative importance of intentions and perceived behavioral control vary across situations and behaviors. The Theory of Reasoned Action has been used to explain the influence of attitude on a range of behaviors, including the acceptance and use of information technology. It underpins the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM),¹⁷ for example.

The Technology Acceptance Model (see figure 2.2) posits that an individual's acceptance of information technology is based on beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. It pays particular attention to the affective response by individuals to technological innovation. The attitude that an individual has toward technology use and adoption decisions is the key mediating construct, and an individual's attitude is determined by beliefs about the perceived usefulness of the innovation. This is a subjective judgment by the individual of the measure of utility offered by the innovation. The second attitude relates to the individual's perception of the ease of use of the innovation. The individual in this case is estimating the amount of cognitive effort required to adopt the technology or use it in a particular work context. Two other features of the TAM draw on the relationship between use and behavioral intention to use. In this case, attitude toward use relates to an individual's perception of how desirable it will be to use a particular innovation. Behavioral intention to use, on the other hand, is a measure of the actual likelihood that a person will use the innovation or technology.

Personal Innovativeness

With this background in mind, let us now return to our discussion of personal innovativeness. The significant recurring theme that appears in theories of technology acceptance is that individual perceptions of the innovation or technology are critical. These are the perceptions that the individual has about the

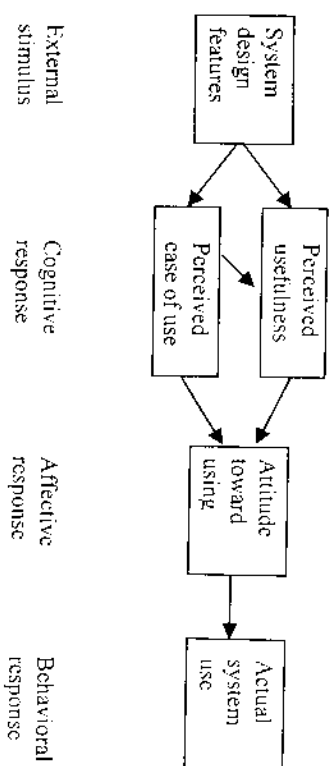


Figure 2.2. Technology Acceptance Model

Source: Davis (1993)

characteristics of the technology or innovation, as well as the perceptions that the individual has concerning how the innovation might be used. It is important to accept both constructs but the next step toward our objective of a better understanding of technology acceptance by individuals is the valuing of individual differences. In particular, it has been argued that technology acceptance can depend on the individual difference variable of personal innovativeness.¹⁸ Personal innovativeness is a predictor of how perceptions of a technology or innovation are formed and the role these might play in the formation of usage intentions.¹⁹

Personal innovativeness has been the focus for work exploring technological innovation for some time, but it has generally been used as an "ex post descriptor of behavior."²⁰ We need methods to explicate and measure this concept, and the first step toward achieving this goal is to see the distinction between global innovativeness and domain-specific innovativeness.²¹ *Global innovativeness* is a characteristic that all individuals possess to some degree. It refers to a level of "willingness to change." In the context of the Internet, the general impact of this characteristic has been manifest in the levels of adoption of Internet technology by what we call the "general public." Global innovativeness has been criticized, however, as having low predictive power when applied to specific adoption decisions.²²