

Examining the Adoption Diffusion Model in Relation to the Absentee Landowner Study

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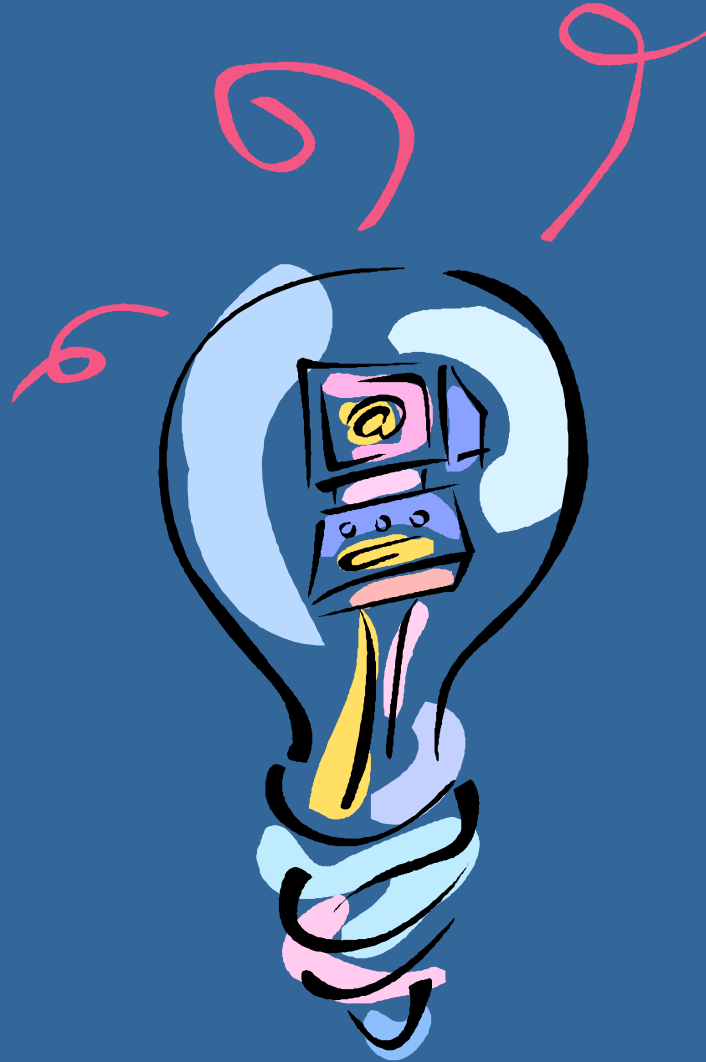
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Outline

- 1) Adoption Diffusion Process
- 2) Similarities and differences of the Adoption Diffusion process as it relates to absentee landowners
- 3) Awareness and interest of absentee landowners in conservation
- 4) Valued informational sources and methods
- 5) Summary

1. Adoption Diffusion Process



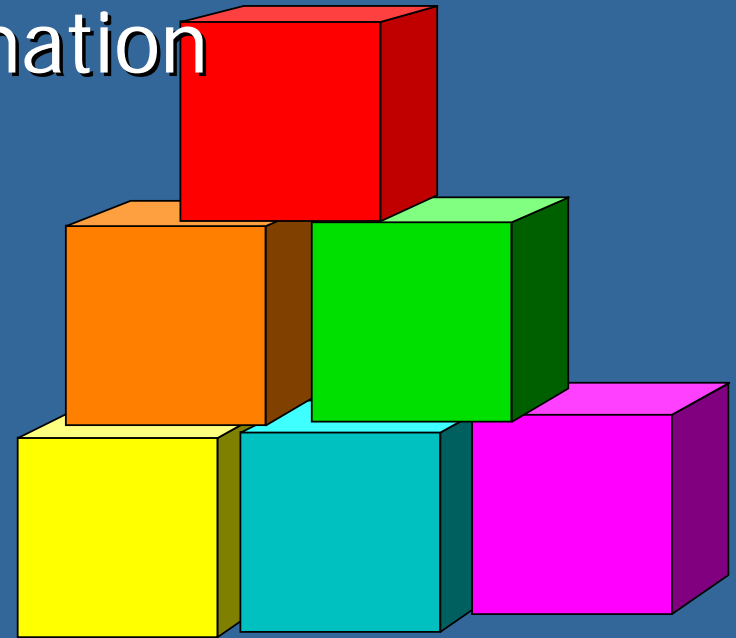
Adoption – Diffusion Process

- Define terms
 - Innovation
 - Adoption
 - Diffusion
- Identify stages of adoption
- Identify sources of information
- Examine characteristics of the diffusion process



Stages in the Adoption Process

- Awareness
- Interest in more information
- Evaluation
- Trial
- Adoption
- Adaptation



<u>Stage</u>	<u>Priority Information Sources</u>
Awareness	(1) media (2) government agencies (3) friends, family, neighbors (4) business & professional
Interest	(1) media (2) government agencies (3) friends, family, neighbors (4) business & professional
Evaluation	(1) friends, family, neighbors (2) government agencies (3) media (4) business & professional

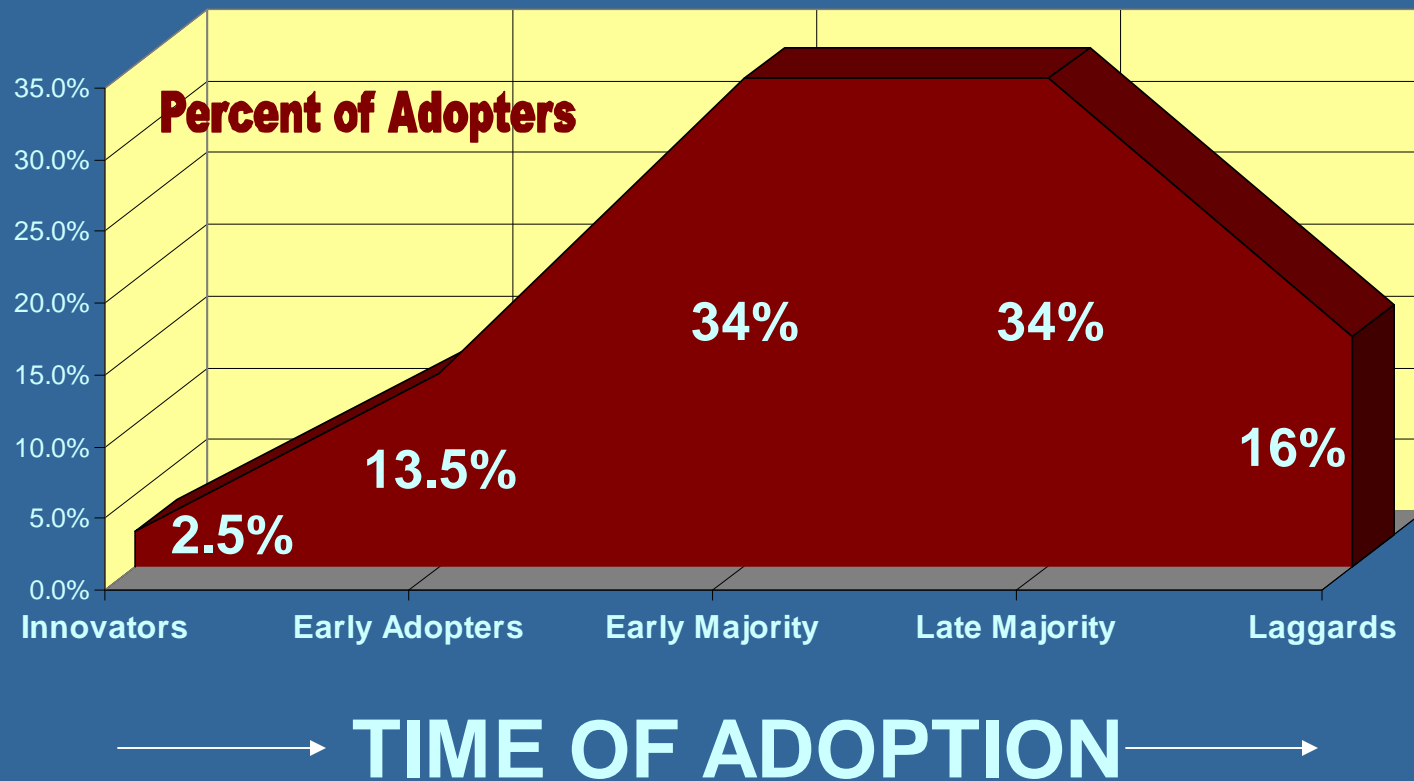
<u>Stage</u>	<u>Priority Information Sources</u>
Trial	(1) friends, family, neighbors (2) government agencies (3) media (4) business & professional
Adoption	(1) friends, family, neighbors (2) government agencies (3) media (4) business & professional
Adaptation	Personal experience

General Characteristics of Adopters/Adoption Process

- Personal
- Farm Structure
- Practice
- Community



Diffusion of Innovations



Adopter Category & Relationship in Farming Community

- Innovators
 - Some opinion leadership; cosmopolitan
- Early Adopters
 - Highest opinion leadership
- Early Majority
 - Some opinion leadership
- Late Majority
 - Little opinion leadership
- Laggards
 - Very little opinion leadership

Farmer Profile of Early Adopter/Majority

- High education, affluent, tuned into to information sources, leader, risk oriented, community oriented, practices are relatively easy to adopt



Important Questions

- How different is the A-D process of operators & absentee landowners?
- How can understanding this process assist us in marketing information, assistance, and programs to absentee landowners?

2. Similarities and Differences



Background Similarities/Differences

	<u>Farm/Ranch Operators</u>	<u>Absentee Landowners</u>
Income	Variable	Upper levels
Dependence on farm income	Varies	Low
Proximity to farm	On farm	Most within 150 miles
Farm background	High	Low-medium
Knowledge of conservation	Varies	Low
Orientation toward conservation	Variable	Positive

Background Similarities/Differences

	<u>Farm/Ranch Operators</u>	<u>Absentee Landowners</u>
Education	Variable	High
Age	Variable	High
Internet abilities	Varies	Medium
Gender	Male	Equal Distribution
Coffee shop orientation	Yes	No

3. Awareness and Interest of Absentee Landowners in Conservation

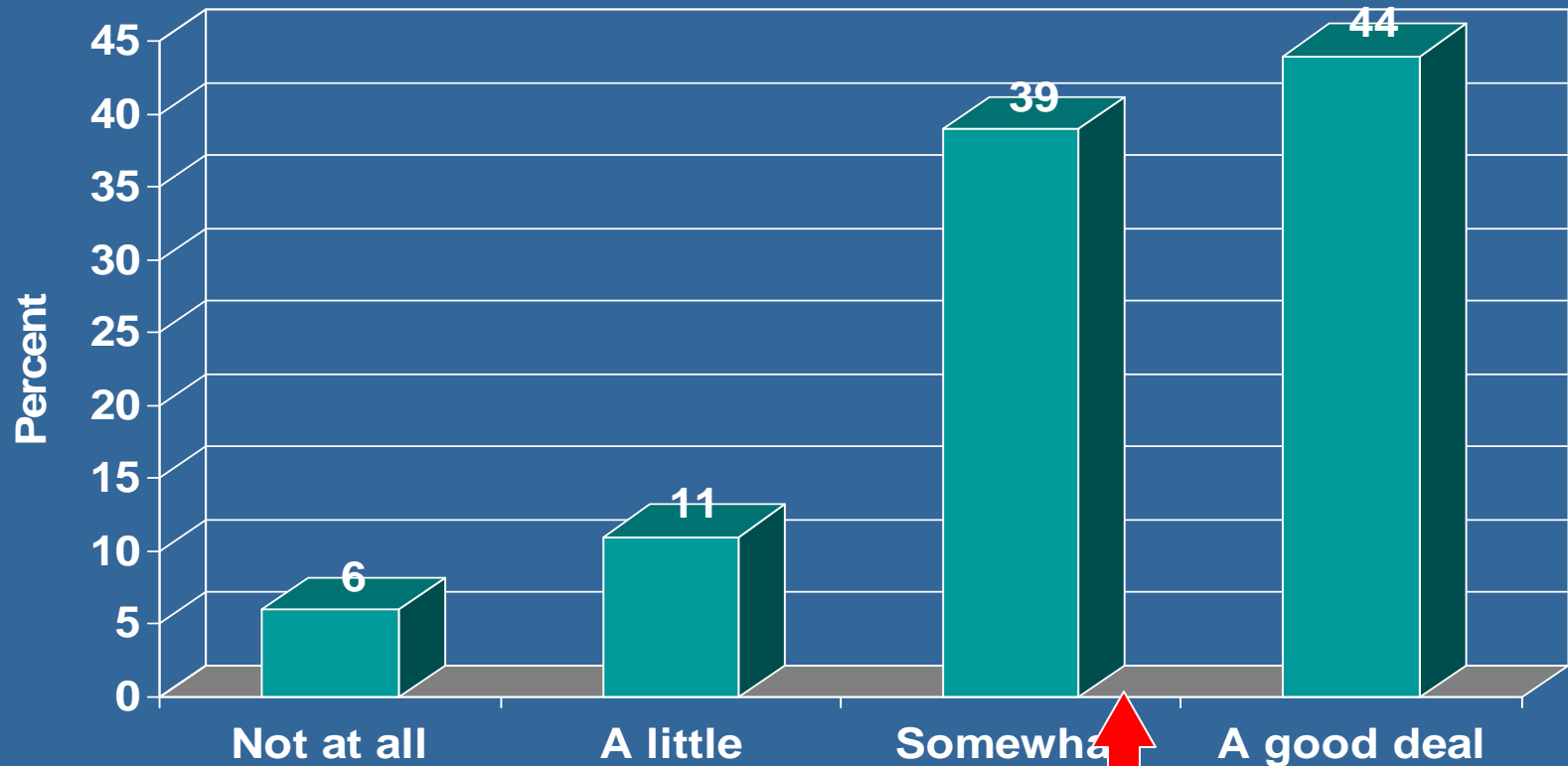


Likert Scale

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Agree 3	Strongly Agree 4
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A Likert scale is based on ordinal numbers; one number is relatively higher/lower than the next. This is a 4-point scale and a 2.5 would be the middle of the scale. High numbers indicate positive ratings; low numbers negative ratings.

Question: To what extent do the following values or needs influence your decisions about your land?
Conservation or concern for the environment



N = 807

Mean = 3.2

Question: To what extent do the following values or needs influence your decisions about your land?

	<u>Mean</u>
■ Conservation or concern for the environment	3.2
■ Recreational or wildlife value	3.2
■ Aesthetics (looks nice)	2.8
■ Tradition - that's how things have always been done	2.4
■ Need for income	2.1

What topics are important to you with respect to your land? (check all that apply)

■ Conservation

- Soil/land 77%
- Wildlife 75%
- Water 66%

■ Government Farm Programs

- Conservation programs 52%
- Commodity support programs 18%
- Crop Insurance 7%

Are you currently, or have you in the past, enrolled in state or federal conservation programs?

- Yes 24%
- No 69%
- Don't Know 7%

What type program have you enrolled?*

	<u>Rent FL</u>	<u>NRFL</u>
Set Aside (e.g., CRP, WRP)	59	76
Cost-Share (non-easement)	22	17

* Percent relates to the 254 respondents who selected "yes" from the previous question

Person primarily responsible for the following management decisions:

	Crop Inputs*	Tillage practices*	Crops grown*	Other conservation practices**
Landowner	2%	4%	3%	30/81%
Tenant/renter	85%	85%	86%	60/5%
Farm manager	6%	5%	5%	4/5%
Family/heirs	1%	1%	1%	4/10%

* Includes respondents who rent out farm land (n=516)

** Includes respondents who do/don't rent out farm land (n=904)

4. Valued Informational Sources and Methods



Indicate importance* of each source of information

	<u>Rent Farm Land</u>	<u>Not Rent FL</u>
Tenant/renter	3.07	1.14
County SWCD	2.47	2.38
NRCS	2.3	2.38
State DNR	2.3	2.55
FSA	2.29	1.77
University Ext.	2.22	2.07
Friends/neighbors	2.12	2.19

* 4 Point Scale: The higher the mean, the more important the source

Preferences for receiving information about land*

	<u>Rent Farm Land</u>	<u>Not Rent Farm Land</u>
Direct mailings	3.95	3.93
One-on-one consultation	3.24	3.25
Internet	2.56	2.68
E-mail	2.51	2.52
Video/DVD	2.48	2.57

*5-point scale:

1

2

3

4

5

Least Preferred

Most Preferred

Computers

- Access to computer/Internet 70%
- Type of service
 - Dial up 29%
 - High-speed 68%
 - Don't Know 3%
- Comfort level using Internet
 - Not comfortable 8%
 - Somewhat comfortable 27%
 - Comfortable 24%
 - Very comfortable 41%

5. Summary



In what ways do absentee landowners provide a marketing opportunity?

- Value conservation, recreation, wildlife
- Money is not the limiting factor
- Literate, can be reached by direct mail
 - Most are digitally connected

Findings

- Conservation, wildlife, aesthetics, and recreation are valued more than income and tradition
- Landowner's knowledge of conservation is low
- Levels of participation in traditional conservation programs are low
- Natural resource organizations do not rank high as an important source of information

Observations

- There are several differences in the Adoption Diffusion process related to absentee landowners
 - Income not a prime motivator
 - Implementation of practices probably not a major factor in the adoption process
 - Local community may not be an important influence
 - Local leadership may not be an important influence
 - Stages of adoption and priority information sources may be different

Observations Regarding Stages of Adoption

Rather than awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, adoption and adaptation; there might be four stages:

- Awareness
- Interest
- Evaluation (goals/values, knowledge, coordination & involvement)
- Adoption
 - Easement adoption by landowner
 - Conservation practice/system adoption by tenant/renter

Observations

- Information dissemination could be most effective to landowner through direct mail (e.g., fact sheets), one-on-one contacts (e.g., telephone), Internet, E-mail, and Video/DVD
- From the Partnership's perspective, educational and technical assistance could be delivered, while minimizing financial assistance

Questions?



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