

Be pragmatic, be opportunistic

Strategies for
'Making the Case'
OntologySummit2011

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The case for what exactly?

• Ontology?

- In practice, the way the term 'ontology' is used within computing covers many quite different things:
 - Building OWL models,
 - Building high quality data models.
- It might help to work out what 'ontology' you are making the case for.
- On the other hand, it might not ...

- From a marketing perspective, it may seem that there are immediate benefits in equivocating between the different senses/uses of ontology.
 - Why not claim that building an OWL file will capture the meaning and guarantee inter-operability (as I have seen people do)?
 - In the medium term, this undermines trust – which may not be a business issue for some people, but will be for others.
 - How do we deal with this? Do we need a strategy for stopping people making seriously misleading cases?



No commercial case for ontology

- One cannot, in principle, make a commercial case for ontology per se.
- Ontology is a tool - one needs to make a case for using this tool to solve some problem(s).
- Examples of problems:
 - Semantic web interoperability
 - Legacy modernisation
 - (this is one problem I work on)
- One issue is that 'ontology' in its many forms has multiple uses across multiple problems.
 - This will NOT sell – you need to pick a use/problem.
 - (Advice given to me 20 years ago.)

Diffusion of innovations

- Where is 'ontology' on the diffusion curve?
 - My guess – 'innovator'.
- So, you cannot sell on the basis of:
 - "All the market leaders are using it."
 - "Here are a hundred and one sites using it."
- Need to:
 - Sell a vision
 - Sell to an innovator
 - Work on greed and fear
- Be opportunistic!!
 - There is no strategy!

