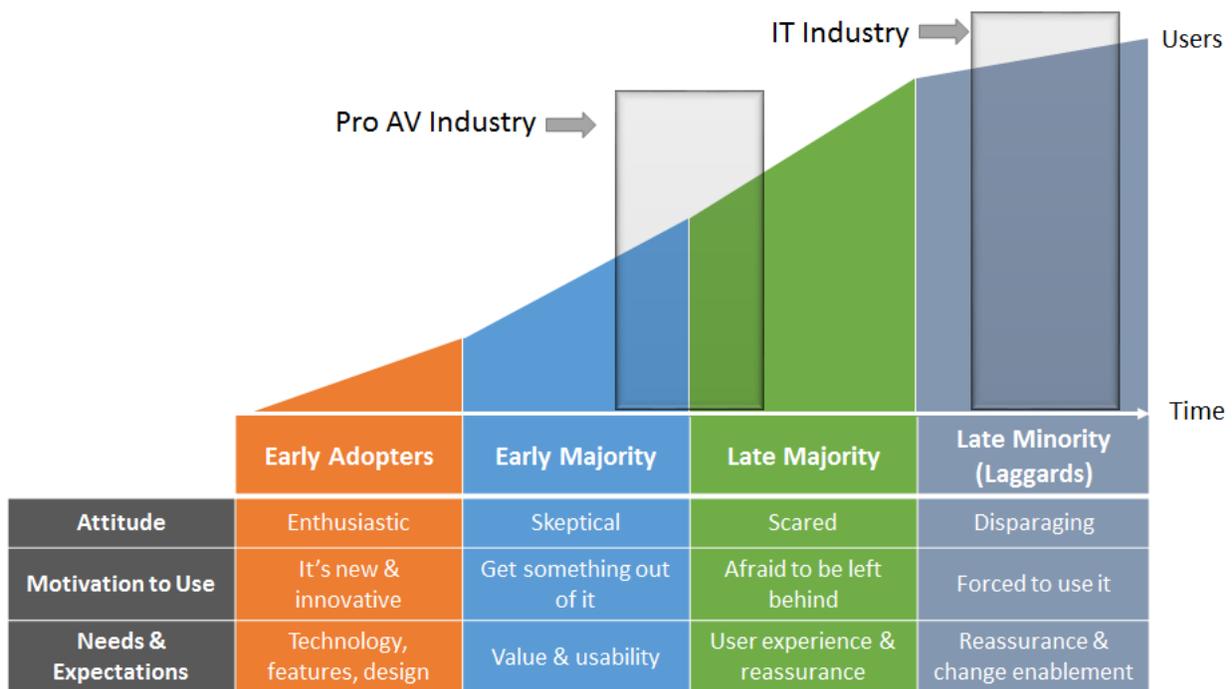# INDUSTRIES IN CONVERGENCE: CONTRASTING AV AND IT

The roots of the professional AV industry derive from a long history of delivering sound and images in entertainment venues and other facilities like restaurants, corporate offices, high end homes, hotels and educational institutions. As such, the primary driver of AV has been to deliver high quality audio and video within a limited and isolated geography.

IT, on the other hand, arose from the need to manage and maintain data networks that required more hand-holding than a Five Nines telecom network. That explains why IT developed the paradigm of real-time monitoring and maintenance, where all relevant assets were fully visible and accessible on the network 24/7.

	AV	IT
Quality Drivers	Clear & crisp audio & video	Uptime & availability
Technical Paradigm	Separate networks, with assets not visible on the network	Integrated networks with real-time visibility
Primary Service Offering	Audio & video	Anything over IP
Phase of Life Cycle	Transitional: Infancy to Maturity	Maturity
Geographic Scope	Single venue	Anywhere, everywhere
Key Results of Industry Integration	To be seen	

It's interesting to note that, although AV existed before IT, it has been much slower to develop into a ubiquitous enterprise service. This is rapidly changing. High quality video and multimedia are quickly overtaking the written word and pure audio as the preferred mode of communicating in all settings, professional and consumer. Combined with technology advances that have vastly increased capability, decreased size and weight, and precipitously dropped cost, AV is now in a "sweet spot" that has the potential to drive adoption throughout the enterprise, in much the same way that computing has become an essential and assumed resource. As such, AV is currently transitioning from a state of infancy to maturity.

	Early Adopters	Early Majority	Late Majority	Late Minority (Laggards)
Attitude	Enthusiastic	Skeptical	Scared	Disparaging
Motivation to Use	It's new & innovative	Get something out of it	Afraid to be left behind	Forced to use it
Needs & Expectations	Technology, features, design	Value & usability	User experience & reassurance	Reassurance & change enablement

The great news for the AV industry is that a typical transition from infancy to maturity entails a rapid shift in consumer behaviors, from skepticism about using the industry's products to fear of *not* using them. It won't be long before it will be rare to find a conference room or classroom that does not have state-of-the-art presentation and automation technology.

HOW AV HAS MEASURED UP AGAINST IT

Taking a close look at the current state of most AV systems within the six pillars gives clear indications as to how AV will evolve during and after this period of integration.

Pillar	Traditional AV	IT-Friendly AV
Network Centric	AV systems were developed as stand-alone islands.	AV seamlessly integrates into existing IT infrastructure and IP networks.
Standards-Based	The AV industry is loaded with "standard" video formats, resolutions, and cable types, and has frequently issued new standards in order to boost performance.	AV embraces standards as a way to ensure interoperability, even if devices are manufactured by different vendors.
Scalable	Since many AV deployments consist of a wide variety of boxes from many vendors with proprietary connectors, scalability is always a challenge.	IT-friendly AV systems use standard connectors and minimize the number of disparate and proprietary boxes, thereby minimizing technology obsolescence.
Reliable	AV systems are cobbled together from many manufacturers, and have numerous points of failure.	New all-in-one products like AMX's Enova DVX All-In-One Presentation Switcher improve reliability by consolidating many functions into a single unit.
Centrally Managed	A high percentage of AV users still maintain their systems off the network, which makes them impossible to monitor.	Once AV assets become part of the network, IT can monitor, troubleshoot and maintain AV assets just like IT assets.
Secure	Industry focus has been on stand-alone systems, so security has not been a top priority for AV.	AV assets are essentially IT assets from a security perspective.

So what does the crystal ball reveal about AV? It is obvious that the integration of AV and IT will lead to the proliferation of AV systems that look and act like IT systems: They will be seamlessly networked with the IT infrastructure, monitored in real time and deployed with a high level of security. This is the essence of AMX's strategy of deploying AV for an IT world.

TAKE ACTION

This Industry Brief is an excerpt from the AMX White Paper "When Industries Collide: What is AV/IT Convergence – And what it means for you." You will find this White Paper and many other industry materials on the **LEARN** page at amx.com (http://amx.com/automate/learn.aspx).

The **PLAN** page (http://amx.com/automate/plan.aspx) includes an interactive tool that allows you to visualize the typical conference room configurations that AMX offers, and to explore which room configuration is best suited to your needs.

You can always **CONTACT A SOLUTIONS ADVISOR**, who will be glad to guide you through the process of identifying, specifying and purchasing your ideal conference room or classroom AV solution. The "Contact an Advisor" link is at the top of every page of the AMX website. Options to connect include chat, phone and email.