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### IoT Should Not Wait for Standards

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3/30/2015 07:00 AM EDT

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#### **It's too early to start setting standards for the Internet of Things, argues the head of IoT at Xchanging.**

More than 50 billion connected devices are anticipated to be in use by 2020 according to Gartner, and the dialogue around how to make the Internet of Things (IoT) work is reaching a fever pitch. Businesses are increasingly compelled by the benefits IoT has to digitize operations.

In an attempt to capitalize on and streamline this expected quick growth, groups like IEEE, AllSeen Alliance and Open Interconnect Consortium are strengthening their voices in favor of IoT standardization and frameworks for interoperability among connected devices and related applications.

But is now really the right time to be incorporating standards for IoT?

Although having standards in place is important in ensuring the safe and secure advancement of IoT, given its newness, I would argue it's too early to implement standards. IoT still needs room to develop without the constraints of standardization – at least for now.

It will likely be a few years until official standards are in place and enforced for IoT. In the meantime, standardization groups are in a race to be among the first to have a solid foothold on IoT standards. The sheer number of standards bodies is already causing fragmentation in a market that is just starting to peek out from behind the curtain.

Although there are a number of groups to choose from, due to the somewhat confusing and contradictory nature of some of them, it can be difficult for companies to get adequately involved. One could argue that these groups exist mainly to benefit the standards body and/or company backing them, as opposed to offering the best experience and options possible for customers as well as the required freedom for developers to truly innovate.

In the past, early standards development has delayed industry growth and stifled business' ability to innovate, limiting companies and developers to a strict set of rules and regulations before taking opportunities to modernize without restrictions in place.

Part of the problem is these standards are not necessarily open -- a company and/or its product can participate only if deemed certified or a member of a particular alliance or group. Often companies can only be certified in one standards body, meaning benefits can be obtained from only one organization. This offers limited potential in developing IoT products and services.

Apple is a good example of how a lack of standards could actually be beneficial for innovation. The company has never been a part of a standards body or consortium, to my knowledge, and look at how well that turned out. Several iPhones later, they're continuing to spur advancements without needing to conform to a standards body; they're free to continue pushing the boundaries at their own pace and by their own rules.

Although standards are important for many of the technologies that impact the way we live, implementing them too soon can be a distraction to true innovation and growth in the emerging IoT space. Allowing time to freely cultivate new concepts and push the envelope with new technologies will be a major factor in determining the eventual success of IoT. Standardizing too soon will mean stunted advancement for an industry that shows enormous promise for changing the way we live, connect and operate.

*-- Richard Cornish is the global head of IoT at Xchanging, a business technology and services provider.*