

Acknowledgements

Early in my research on the democratization of innovation I was very fortunate to gain five major academic mentors and friends. Nathan Rosenberg, Richard Nelson, Zvi Griliches, Edwin Mansfield, and Ann Carter all provided crucial support as I adopted economics as the organizing framework and toolset for my work. Later, I collaborated with a number of wonderful co-authors, all of whom are friends as well: Stan Finkelstein, Nikolaus Franke, Dietmar Harhoff, Joachim Henkel, Cornelius Herstatt, Ralph Katz, Georg von Krogh, Karim Lakhani, Gary Lilien, Christian Luthje, Pamela Morrison, William Riggs, John Roberts, Stephan Schrader, Mary Sonnack, Stefan Thomke, Marcie Tyre, and Glen Urban. Other excellent research collaborators and friends of long standing include Carliss Baldwin, Sonali Shah, Sarah Slaughter, and Lars Jeppesen.

At some point as interest in a topic grows, there is a transition from dyadic academic relationships to a real research community. In my case, the essential person in enabling that transition was my close friend and colleague Dietmar Harhoff. He began to send wonderful Assistant Professors (*Habilitanden*) over from his university, Ludwig Maximilians Universität in Munich, to do collaborative research with me as MIT Visiting Scholars. They worked on issues related to the democratization of innovation while at MIT and then carried on when they returned to Europe. Now they are training others in their turn.

I have also greatly benefited from close contacts with colleagues in industry. As Director of the MIT Innovation Lab, I work together with senior innovation managers in just a few companies to develop and try out innovation tools in actual company settings. Close intellectual colleagues and friends of many years standing in this sphere include Jim Euchner from Pitney-Bowes, Mary Sonnack and Roger Lacey from 3M, John Wright

from IFF, Dave Richards from Nortel Networks, John Martin from Verizon, Ben Hyde from the Apache Foundation, Brian Behlendorf from the Apache Foundation and CollabNet, and Joan Churchill and Susan Hiestand from Lead User Concepts. Thank you so much for the huge (and often humbling) insights that your and our field experimentation has provided!

I am also eager to acknowledge and thank my family for the joy and learning they experience and share with me. My wife Jessie is a professional editor and edited my first book in a wonderful way. For this book, however, time devoted to bringing up the children made a renewed editorial collaboration impossible. I hope the reader will not suffer unduly as a consequence! My children Christiana Dagmar and Eric James have watched me work on the book—indeed they could not avoid it as I often write at home. I hope they have been drawing the lesson that academic research can be really fun. Certainly, that is the lesson I drew from my father, Arthur von Hippel. He wrote his books in his study upstairs when I was a child and would often come down to the kitchen for a cup of coffee. In transit, he would throw up his hands and say, to no one in particular, “*Why* do I choose to work on such difficult problems?” And then he would look deeply happy. Dad, I noticed the smile!

Finally my warmest thanks to my MIT colleagues and students and also to MIT as an institution. MIT is a really inspiring place to work and learn from others. We all understand the requirements for good research and learning, and we all strive to contribute to a very supportive academic environment. And, of course, new people are always showing up with new and interesting ideas, so fun and learning are always being renewed!

Democratizing Innovation

