

Core Concepts: Contingency

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February 1, 2022

Last Modified: 2022-02-04

Abstract

Examining the core concept of contingency.

“It depends!”

This is perhaps the simplest yet most important, and arguably most useful, of our core concepts. My go to response is “it depends”, which can admittedly be irritating but is almost universally true.

Regardless of the problem under consideration context will play a significant part in determining a suitable solution. Consequently, any answer is likely to depend upon the context in which the problem presents itself.

Questions of the form, “Which tool is best for X”, “What training/certification is best to pursue for Y”, “Should I use technology Z” can all be answered with “it depends”. Simply put, more information is required before any sensible answer can be provided.

To make matters worse, today’s good answer may be tomorrow’s bad answer. Context changes; new technology becomes available, old technology is no longer supported, new organisational goals are set, new regulations are imposed, different skill pools become available making these skills comparatively inexpensive (making the cost of moving to technology relevant to those skills favourable).

The only inevitability is change and that “it depends” will continue to be an important consideration.