Often hidden under a varnish of romantic traditionalism, innovation is a strong driver of the wine industries world-wide. Innovation is the outcome of an adoption decision by an innovator. Like all decisions that are not totally irrational, adoption decisions are based on some information about the new product or process that is up for adoption.

Economic models of adoption differ significantly in how they account for the information that enters adoption decisions. Marshall considered information to be somehow "in the air", i.e. he did not model the information part at all. For the sociologists of hybrid corn, information gave rise to the well known S-shaped diffusion curves. For many economists, beginning with Griliches, information was a red hering - what counts in this approach are net returns to innovation. Then came Porter whose idea of a California wine cluster is a virulent meme in the minds of many wine economists. Finally, the idea of networks spilled from the sociology of innovation into agricultural economics and wine economics in particular.

Information on networks within an industry is not a free good and data on the members of a network and the complex linkages among them are notoriously difficult to obtain when the networks comprise more than small number of agents. It is therefore reasonable to ask: Does it pay to collect network information in adoption studies?

This question motivated our study of ozone sanitation technology (OST) adoption by wineries in California. Wineries may use OST as an alternative for chemicals or hot water for sanitizing and cleaning of barrels and other winery equipment. Privately aquired information about OST is likely to be an important factor determining adoption because the technology was not promoted by public extension services or the state's universities, and its demands on finance and workers' skills are modest.

In the second quarter of 2007 we contacted by email 853 wineries in California and invited them to participate in a web-survey of OST adoption; 139 of the wineries contacted were customers of an OST-equipment supplier from Nappa. We received 87 responses from wineries that were not customers of the OST-supplier and 40 responses from customers. From the 127 responding wineries 75 had adopted OST.

Our questionnaire comprised five groups of questions: (i) general characteristics of the respondent and the winery; (ii) sources of technical information and characteristics of persons with whom technical information is regularly exchanged; (iii) technical cooperation with other wineries and innovativeness of the winery; (iv) OST awareness, use and assessment, and (v) sources of information about OST. Using standard statistical tests we compare in our paper OST users and non-users with respect to their responses to the five groups of questions. To decide whether collecting network information pays, we compare results from binary regression models of OST which include and exclude variables that represent networking activities of the wineries.