

## Axiom 4

---

### Recommended Citation

"Axiom 4", Global Problem Solving, December 10, 1999, <https://nautilus.org/global-problem-solving/axiom-4/>

---

[axiom 1 - metcalf's law](#)

[axiom 2 - early entrants win the field](#)

[axiom 3 - significance precedes momentum](#)

[axiom 4 - standards as power](#)

[axiom 5 - producer and consumer utility](#)

[axiom 6 - gatekeepers, intermediaries, and the attention deficit](#)

[axiom 7 - positive feedback loops](#)

[axiom 8 - differentiation of products and pricing](#)

[axiom 9 - switching costs and lock-in](#)

[axiom 10 - free information: cooperation in a competitive environment](#)

[bibliography](#)

### **Axiom 4 - Standards as Power**

*In the network economy, ever-less energy is needed to complete a single transaction, but ever-more energy is needed to agree on what pattern the transaction should follow (Kelly, 69).*

*Eventually technical standards will become as important as laws (Kelly, 71)*

*Since networks are multiple, the interoperating codes and switches between networks become the fundamental sources in shaping, guiding, and misleading societies (Castells 1996, 471).*

*We care about standards because of the fantastically complicated economic question of who captures the often considerable value that is created through the establishment of a standard ...[s]tandards are path-dependent, and that because of network effects, they tend to have a winner-take all quality, with one standard becoming dominant and devotees of other standards becoming stranded (Agre 1998(b), 6)*

---

View this online at: <https://nautilus.org/global-problem-solving/axiom-4/>

Nautilus Institute

608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:  
[nautilus@nautilus.org](mailto:nautilus@nautilus.org)