

# **Adopting a new Development Technology – Testing the Rivalry Hypothesis\***

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*Preliminary – please do not circulate.*

## **Abstract**

The success of a new development technology depends on its ability to outreach as many potential adopters as possible. To maximize the impact of each dollar spent in development interventions we should be able to affect or at least understand the diffusion process of innovations. This paper tests the role of rivalry in the diffusion process of agricultural information in rural Mozambique. We see how real-life diffusion of information compares with playing two lab games that simulate diffusion of pure rival and non-rival goods. We find that when receiving rival messages individuals are 26% more likely to keep it to themselves than when they receive a piece of non-rival information. Also, we find that conditional on the number of neighbors (degree), individuals who are more central in the network are less likely to share both types of messages. The different diffusion processes we observe suggest that implementers should be careful about how to diffuse information when beneficiaries perceive a new technology as a rival good.

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