

Disruption Readiness Level

One scale for where a technology sits in its life, from the laboratory to the history books. DRL picks up where NASA's TRL stops and carries the full arc through disruption to retirement.

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Pre-market DRL 1–2 not yet buyable	Early window DRL 3 a bet on a crossing that has not happened	Buy zone DRL 4–5 the crossing has happened, deploy with confidence	Caution DRL 6 buy only with an exit plan	Retire DRL 7–9 replacement and reference only
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DRL	LEVEL	WHAT IT MEANS	WHAT IT TELLS A DECISION-MAKER
1	Experimental	Science and lab work. The open question is whether it is even possible.	Watch. Not buyable.
2	In Development	Engineering and scaling toward a sellable product. Can it be built and supplied at quality?	Track its readiness. Still not buyable.
3	Emerging	Commercially available but before the tipping point: niche, not yet cost-competitive at scale.	Buyable now with a forward-looking case. Risky early-mover window.
4	Disrupting	Cost and capability have crossed the incumbent. Adoption is accelerating through the knee of the curve.	Usually the smart buy. The shift is underway.
5	Dominant	The winner and current incumbent. The mainstream default, adoption near saturation.	The safe, conventional choice.
6	Declining	A newer technology has crossed it. It is losing share, and the decline compounds.	Buy only with eyes open and an exit plan.
7	Legacy	Displaced from new-build decisions. The installed base lives on, and a replacement market can persist for years.	Do not build new on it. Replacement demand only.
8	Obsolete	No longer sold or supported, but only recently so.	Plan your exit. Reference only.
9	Historical	Out of the active market entirely. Kept as a case study.	For learning, not for buying.

How a technology moves. The market levels (3 to 7) turn on cost and capability, not opinion: a technology crosses from Emerging to Disrupting when it beats the incumbent on cost-capability and adoption accelerates, and from Dominant to Declining when a newer challenger crosses it in turn.

Lineage. The DRL keeps the spirit of NASA's Technology Readiness Level and extends the Seba Technology Disruption Framework (Tony Seba / RethinkX) into the market half of a technology's life. Developed and stewarded by NavigateX.