

Software as a Service - 2009 and beyond ...

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Software as a service (SaaS, typically pronounced 'sass') is a model of software deployment where an application is hosted as a service provided to customers across the Internet. By eliminating the need to install and run the application on the customer's own computer, SaaS alleviates the customer's burden of software maintenance, ongoing operation, and support.

Using SaaS also can conceivably reduce that up-front expense of software purchases, through less costly, on-demand pricing. The SaaS software is handled by a third-party application service provider (ASP). This way, end users may reduce their investment on server hardware.

Benefits to our clients:

1. Our software will deliver via a web browser independent of the client schools primary operating system environment – including MAC O/S.
2. You do not require dedicated or shared server hardware and associated software licensing.
3. Our software will function independent from any Managed Operating Environment. (MOE).
4. You do not require in-house technical support to install, update or manage the software application.
5. The lead time from registration and licensing to full function and availability is significantly reduced to days instead of weeks.
6. Centralized feature updating, which obviates the need for you to download patches and upgrades, and then wait for tech support staff to install.
7. Using the SaaS method, we only need to update one server – so any changes, improvements or fixes affect all of our clients on the same day at the same time.
8. Our clients will get new features, improvements and upgrades all the time, as they happen - not at roll-out intervals.
9. The centralised location means that our software development team can write and implement enhancements very quickly.
10. Our software development team can now offer a service whereby new units, additions or amendments can be offered with a very low lead time.
11. You will enjoy the benefits of these enhancements as soon as the new feature is added to the software application.
12. Our data centre hosting our SaaS maintains the highest level of data and building security around the clock 24/7.
13. A small monthly subscription fee is paid instead of a lump sum payment at the start of the year. (Although a lump sum payment will still be accepted.)
14. During power outages, an onsite power generator will support our data centre at full capacity for 24 hours.
15. Our data centre features a high speed dedicated 155 MBit STM1 ATM link, and multiple OC3 internet connections with 6MB available PVC for failover.
16. 24 hour Management of Services provides fully automated, password-protected, web-based administration that allows us to set up services in real-time.
17. The client users will now have full access to a secure logon to our software 24/7, enabling

users to work from any location, any time - including home.

18. Our SaaS provider conducts daily back-ups with offsite archives of weekly and monthly backups.

Key characteristics

The key characteristics of SaaS software include:

SaaS applications are generally priced on a per-user basis or a flat per month rate. SaaS revenue streams to the vendor are therefore lower initially than traditional software license fees, but are also recurring, and therefore viewed as more predictable, much like maintenance fees for licensed software.

The present or "standard" way to use business applications is to pay upfront and buy a software license and stack of CD's from a vendor. Often this will mean buying extra hardware just to run the software. Then you are left to run the applications from your server, manage the hardware and software yourself, and panicking whenever an upgrade or patch needs to be made.

With SaaS, all you need to do is pay a monthly rental or subscription fee, log-on to the application and start work.

However the SaaS model is about more than just delivery, the model is in many ways about economies of scale. SaaS applications have one database on a bank of servers that serve many customers. The SaaS provider manages the hardware and updates the software. The point to be clear on here is that the SaaS solution only needs to update one server - any changes, affect all the customers.

Another key benefit of the SaaS model is probably one of the most important but least understood: SaaS solution users get new feature upgrades all the time.

How?

Since it is one big application in a centralised location the development team can write and implement enhancements very quickly. Users enjoy the benefits as soon as the new feature set goes up on the site.

Analysts claim that by 2010, 30% of new software will be delivered via an SAAS model. Variously termed "on-demand software," the "ASP model" or "hosted software," SAAS involves renting Web-based software hosted at the provider's site. For many companies large and small, SAAS is the best way to roll out new technology.