



SaaS(Software as a Service)

Today there are no limits to what can be accomplished on or through the internet coupled with the variety of software that exist. The increasingly potent fusion of greater than ever bandwidth, heavy-duty processors and economical storage are opening up huge vistas for utilizing software, designing and deployment in computers, on servers in corporate data centers and on the Internet. There is an abundance of business solutions which can be delivered and consumed, thus providing the best user experience and the most business value.

With the constant influx of futuristic innovations coming our way in the arena of computer software, it is no surprise that the latest entrant is something that combines local software with Internet services. SaaS, (*pronounced Sass*), is a model of software operation where an application is hosted as a service which is made available to customers through the Internet. SaaS (Software as a Service) is fast gaining popularity due to facts like it has simplified deployment and reduced customer acquisition costs, and allows developers to support many customers through a single version of the product. It completely negates the concept of installing and running an application on the customer's own computer and removes the need of software maintenance, ongoing operation and support.

The use of SaaS also shrinks the cost of the up-front expense of software purchases through the concept of on-demand pricing. Thus, from the perspective of the software vendor, this software operation offers a resilient safeguard of its intellectual property and establishes an ongoing revenue stream. An important aspect is that the software vendor of SaaS has the option of hosting the application on its own web server or this function can even be handled by a third party application service provider, which radically reduces the end users' investment on server hardware as well.

Commonly associated with business software, SaaS is characteristically considered as a low-cost option which allows businesses to acquire similar benefits as those of commercially licensed, internally operated software minus the associated complication and excessive preliminary cost. The SaaS model is appropriate for many kinds of software, especially in cases where the customers are not very interested in or capable of deploying software, and yet have a substantial need for computing in their businesses. Some of the areas where the SaaS model is making inroads are IT Service Management,

Accounting, Human Resources, Customer Relationship Management, Video Conferencing and e-mail.

The fundamental features of the software delivered by SaaS include network-based access to and the management of software that is commercially available. It also makes possible centrally managed activities instead of those limited to each customer's site, which in turn make it possible for customers to access applications remotely via the Web. The application delivery is more akin to a one-to-many model rather than a traditional one-to-one model, including architecture, pricing, partnering and management characteristics. And the feature updating is consolidated and precludes the need for downloadable patches and upgrades.

Finally, SaaS is a new paradigm which redefines the delivery of software products and their usage. Whereas traditionally, software products were bought by customers and installed on their desktops, SaaS makes it possible for the user to access the products through the desktops remotely. Moreover, the new versions are more accessible, in a shorter time span and the testing is simpler as well. Thus, SaaS is paving the way for making much headway into the next generation of software services and products.