

Servoy – the first choice to deliver “Software as a Service” (SaaS) platform to accommodate fast, better and cheap application development to Java.

“Servoy has a better software development mousetrap for quickly building applications while still relying on industry standard JAVA, SQL, XML. Where programmers productivity is an issue, Servoy shines”.

Peter S. Kastner - VP & Research Director, Aberdeen Group

Thinking about Software as a Service (SaaS)

We believe that SaaS (Software as a Service) is going to have a major impact on the software industry. SaaS will change the way people build, sell, buy, and use software. The concept behind software as a service is simple. Instead of a software vendor selling a software license that the client then implements and maintains in its own environment, the vendor -- or, more properly, the service provider -- hosts the application on its own computer in its own data center and provides access to the system over the internet on a subscription basis.

For the SaaS model to be put into effect, the vendor will need to evaluate its traditional application. The development of higher-quality, cost-efficient applications -- in a fraction of the time -- is a necessity as the vendor strives to drive a business based on SaaS.

This paper highlights the application development shifts that vendors must go through to accommodate SaaS; and provides a detailed analysis of how the Servoy platform has become the number one choice for vendors wishing to develop and deliver SaaS applications.

SaaS often requires new application development

While the benefits of SaaS for customers are numerous and the business potential for vendors rapidly increases, challenges exist for software companies planning to move to a SaaS business model. Many vendors are struggling with their traditional application software. In order to successfully implement the concept of SaaS, they must provide an application platform that will ensure configurability; multi-tenant efficiency; scalability; and ensure consistent, end-to-end operation of business-critical applications with the same quality of service as before.

Most vendors are faced with upgrading their (aging) traditional systems or building new applications to support the new concept. Traditional systems were often developed with programming languages (3GL and 4GL environments) and database systems that are difficult and time-consuming to change. New development lifecycles on these systems are too slow and too rigid to meet the rapid changing business demands of SaaS. Therefore vendors need to re-evaluate the programming language, especially for those applications that are hard to upgrade to the new concept, as the SaaS model itself requires adaptive and continuous fast changes. A new development tool must be considered -- one that allows organizations to build software applications faster, better and cheaper.

The economic characteristic of SaaS

Software as a service is a growing approach to delivering business applications. For companies that have implemented some form of software as a service, the economic results are positive. According to a 2006/2007 survey of Computer Economics, there is no doubt that consumer adoption rates are greatly increasing. As this survey shows, 57% of vendors indicate that economic benefits exceeded the cost of the investment, while 34% report a breakeven ROI. Only 9% of respondents indicated a negative ROI for software as a service.

“In fact, software as a service is a key growth within the overall software sector and will represent a third of all new software within five years.”

Benjamin Pring - Research Vice President, Gartner

Realizing the benefits of SaaS requires shifts in thinking on the part of the vendor. The goal shifts to targeting smaller businesses or departments, by reducing the minimum cost at which software can be sold and creating an economy of scale. A SaaS vendor with x number of customers subscribing to a single, centrally-hosted software service enables the vendor to serve all of its customers in a consolidated environment. The SaaS model can only be realized by standardization; easier and faster software development; and lower maintenance. Only with the right development tool can SaaS vendors offer solutions at a much lower cost than traditional vendors.

Investment in SaaS oriented development environment

The economy of scale is an important business rule for SaaS. Therefore SaaS applications are built to scale well. The operating cost for each customer will continue to drop as more customers are added. As the number of customers increases, the SaaS provider will develop multi-tenancy as a core competency, leading to higher-quality offerings at a lower cost.

The high percentage of adoption indicates that nearly every established software vendor is being forced to determine how to revamp their legacy applications to join the SaaS movement. A recent study of THINK strategies shows that 50% of the software companies are already planning to adopt SaaS in 2006. Other studies show even higher ratios. The key challenge for the SaaS vendor is to ensure that the program language is simple and easy, without incurring extra development or operation costs.

Do we go with the traditional Java, .NET code or Servvoy?

To expand the adoption of the SaaS application, the majority of software vendors are taking a big step in the direction of developing and deploying SaaS in standard, non-proprietary development tools as .NET or Java. A move to .NET or Java is an attractive option -- offering a variety of SaaS enabling technologies such as web-services; a service-oriented architecture; easy deployment and greater skill availability.

However, a complete rewrite in .Net or Java can be a lengthy expensive process, and require highly-skilled programmers. Clearly .Net and Java are very powerful development environments. A developer can pretty much do anything -- but making any mistake takes forever to debug the code. A large number of vendors with legacy applications are now facing real business issues of high investments in new technology and skills shortages; while at the same time, having legacy applications with high maintenance costs.

Because a SaaS-oriented development environment needs to allow for complexity, and a large amount of users to be simultaneously logged in and perform their activities, Java seems to be the logical choice. Clearly, Java is a very powerful development environment that also enables a developer to pretty much do anything. However, as noted, a complete rewrite in Java can be a lengthy expensive process; and require highly-skilled programmers.

Servvoy BV, a Dutch-based software company, proves that there is a way to make Java development fast and easy. With Servvoy, vendors will have the advantages of developing in a Java-based environment; and creating richer SaaS applications -- faster than anything else on the market today. Many vendors, worldwide, have avoided the long and rather complicated development cycles already by leveraging the new and much more SaaS attracting Servvoy environment.

Why do companies use Servvoy?

As companies look for an alternative to enable a faster time-to-value and low-cost alternative to re-develop their legacy applications into a Java-based environment, they are turning to Servvoy. With Servvoy, they can program 5 to 10 times faster compared to .Net or Java-based environments -- and still have the advantage of using Java technology. Servvoy lowers the development and maintenance cost up to 70%, making the TCO (Total Cost of Ownership) lower than .Net based environments.

adBlocks, an ISV (Independent Software Vendor) with large clients like Time Warner and Comcast, developed and deployed their entire application within 6 months:

“The Servoy ISV program helped us to migrate our legacy 4GL-based application into a modern Java application in less than 6 months. Our product contains over 20 man-years of ongoing development – so this is a fabulous achievement and we couldn’t be happier with the result.”

Michael Phelps - President AdBlocks

Choices software, a leading provider of software solutions for the insurance industry, rebuilt their key software application using Servoy in just 3 months; and was the first largescale developer to migrate to Servoy’s Web Client Technology -- now serving thousands of insurance agencies online:

“With Servoy, we are able to deliver Software as a Service in a very seamless way. Servoy has built-in functions to support SaaS that made it very easy to build this capability into our existing product in days rather than months.”

Dean Westover - President, Choices Software, Inc.

Many of Servoy’s customers with enterprise-wide applications are enhancing their existing Progress, Oracle, SAP, Great Plains, Navision, Visual Basic and Java applications with Servoy:

“Servoy was the only vendor with a proven and easy to learn development tool to replace our legacy system and address all our needs to deliver a new widely accepted planning application with tight integration into payroll and other financial systems. It took us only three months to develop our new system ready for migration.”

Marc Huizer - CEO, Ayton BV.

The Servoy development platform is also designed for companies desiring to migrate valued applications from legacy languages such as Gupta/Centura, Oracle Forms, Visual Basic 6, RPG,

Delphi and PowerBuilder.

What is under the hood?

Servoy is based on industry standards: SQL or XML on the data layer; Java or JavaScript to implement business rules and workflow; PDF, RTF or HTML to render text; webservices;AJAX; RIA; etc. -- always supporting the best and most up-to-date technologies that make application development and deployment really productive.

Servoy comes with a large built-in library of scripts and plugins -- providing pre-defined, easily-customizable, powerful functionality to implement workflow systems; reporting solutions; database front-ends; data-entry applications; KPI dashboard solutions; graphing; POS applications; CMS; CRM applications; and many more.

Servoy offers built-in support “out of the box” for all popular SQL databases -- Oracle, IBM DB/2, Microsoft SQL Server, PostgreSQL, Sybase, MySQL to name a few -- via a JDBC driver. Servoy seamlessly connects to all your existing relational database systems, regardless of platform. Servoy Server runs on all modern operating systems such as:Windows, Linux, Mac OS X, Solaris,AS/400, and HP/UX.

While a complete rewrite can be a lengthy and an expensive process, Servoy offers you substantial savings and rapid delivery -- in order to encompass all the necessary technology needed to successfully implement your SaaS application.

About Servvoy BV

Servvoy BV is a privately-held company established to develop, sell and support the Servvoy suite of products. The idea for Servvoy started in 1998 by the four co-founders of the company -- being frustrated with the limitations of desktop database tools on one hand; and the complexity of web-based development tools, the steep learning curve, and the long development time on the other.

Today over 1500 companies and more than 10,000 developers are working with the Servvoy suite of products. Companies like Symantec; Stanford University; Verizon; and UCLA hospital rely on Servvoy for managing and presenting data to their customers and employees – providing rich applications over LAN, WAN and Internet connections. Servvoy can count Apple, Oracle and Sybase among its technology partners.

The Servvoy worldwide headquarters is located in The Netherlands (Amersfoort) where all research and development; as well as international sales and marketing activities are centralized and coordinated; Servvoy Inc., Servvoy's US office, is responsible for all US and North American sales and marketing events.

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