



MONITORING AS A SERVICE

SaaS and IT Infrastructure Monitoring, June 2007

Software as a service (SaaS) has evolved exponentially since its inception, and is being rapidly embraced by companies as the new way to buy and deploy enterprise applications. SaaS is quicker, easier and cheaper than traditional software, which allows businesses to focus their IT budgets on providing competitive advantage, rather than maintenance.

SaaS, also known as on-demand, is the delivery of software as an Internet-based service via a web browser, rather than as a product that must be purchased, installed, customized and maintained. Salesforce.com is a good example of a successful on-demand enterprise application.

SaaS lowers the risk of deploying new solutions, minimizes training and places the onus of upgrades on the vendor to continue its innovation. Small and medium businesses are the most enthusiastic adopters of SaaS, because of the simplicity and strong ROI compared to maintaining complex applications with rooms of server computers and specialized IT staff.

IT infrastructure or systems monitoring solutions are uniquely suited to the software-as-a-service model. Traditional enterprise systems management software, including IBM Tivoli, HP Openview, BMC Patrol, are typically large, complex client-server applications requiring dedicated servers and IT support staff. Monitoring-as-a-Service offerings like Red Hat Command Center, offer significant advantages in rapid deployment, reduced costs, ease of use and lower risks. All those advantages come with minimal sacrifice of control and customizations.



CUSTOMER BENEFITS

- **Rapid deployment:** Using traditional software is expensive and time consuming. With SaaS, limited customization and the use of existing infrastructure significantly reduce the implementation work. As a result, a SaaS based solution can be deployed in mere days rather than the weeks or months sometimes required for purchased-packaged software.
- **Lower initial cost:** Traditional systems monitoring packages have large upfront costs including software licenses fees, dedicated servers, and databases. They typically require professional service engagements to install and configure. SaaS offerings like Red Hat Command Center have significantly lower annual subscription fees, and do not require additional software, hardware and setup costs.
- **Lower maintenance cost:** Because SaaS companies manage the technology, their services require no local IT staff to maintain a complex monitoring infrastructure. There are no additional costs to maintain the health of the monitoring solution, data storage, backups, fail over, or upgrades. Offerings like Red Hat Command Center do not even require specialized staff or skills. Under the subscription model, not only are the start-up costs lower, but future costs are known and predictable..
- **Ease of use:** SaaS monitoring solutions offer a simple web interface for configuration and use. Traditional systems monitoring software often has too many unnecessary or unwanted features, many of them difficult to find or access,.
- **Reduced risk:** SaaS solutions are simple to setup and use via web interfaces. Traditional systems monitoring software typically requires lengthy set up and configuration. The long setup time introduces higher risk, since many 'big' projects never get completed; so money is wasted for partial setups or under-utilized monitoring solutions.
- **Seamless upgrades, and frequent feature releases:** With SaaS, software upgrades, new features, and functionality are updated added routinely as part of the service. Upgrading traditional enterprise application software can be time consuming, disruptive and costly to the business. The expense of upgrades is an important, hidden cost of traditional systems monitoring software because of the frequent updates and version changes in the applications being monitored.
- **Easy accessibility and scalability:** SaaS applications are accessible from anywhere via the Internet. That may not be the case with traditional client-server based monitoring solutions. Additionally, SaaS based applications are designed to be scalable, across multiple customers, and multiple locations with incremental and predictable costs to the customer.
- **Security and SLA:** SaaS applications are designed for high levels of security, and SaaS companies monitor security aggressively. SaaS providers also offer strong service level agreements (SLA) related to service availability and data privacy.
- **Better customer care:** Success of the SaaS model is based on continued subscription services. This leads to lower vendor lock-in risks. SaaS vendors are likely to be highly responsive to customer inputs and any service issues because customers are not beholden to long-term license agreements.



POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES

- Loss of control and customization: Because the software is run by the SaaS provider, customers do have less control over the application. Onsite monitoring solutions are indeed more customizable than SaaS monitoring applications. This is an issue for large custom integrations. SaaS vendors are likely to offer web services type API to provide flexibility.
- Costs for very large deployments: Large, complex deployments requiring several customizations are likely to find greater value over a longer period of time in using traditional on-premise monitoring solutions.
- Security and privacy concerns: With SaaS, monitoring data is transmitted and stored outside the customer firewall Security and privacy issues depend on the SLA offered by the SaaS provider.
- Performance and offline access: Loss of Internet connectivity means that the application and data is inaccessible. The service itself could encounter performance problems if there are connectivity issues.
- Most of these disadvantages are addressed by reputable competent vendors with strong products and service level agreements. Red Hat Command Center offers monitoring data export for offline analysis, and high standards related to performance, security and data privacy.

CONCLUSION

Software as a service delivery model applied to IT infrastructure monitoring (monitoring-as-service) offers a strong value proposition around quicker implementations, simplicity and lower costs for businesses who do not have the resources or the will to maintain complex monitoring solutions internally

NO HIDDEN COSTS, FASTER ROI



