



The software industry 3, 5 and 10 years from now will continue its move to the cloud and extensive mobile support. We'll be using predominately browser-based and mobile apps for all but the most demanding content-creation or analysis needs. Those are the two clearest unstoppable trends, the move to the browser and mobile devices. It's underway already.

Companies will predominately assemble cloud-based solutions out of applications hosted in either public, private or hybrid clouds. I don't believe one vendor or one solution will dominate an industry or vertical space. You have to have very deep solutions to meet a customer's real needs, and no one vendor can provide that level of depth in all aspects of running a business. At Nexonia we integrate our expense management and timesheet systems into many accounting systems that already have expense and time systems, but not at the depth that we do and not in a sufficient way for our customers to be able to run their business effectively. I believe the future will be one of integrated solutions assembled out of component parts, likely from a variety of different vendors. Successful software companies will recognize this and plan for it.

Virtually all successful cloud solutions will have a mobile component, predominately via native apps but possibly moving to browser-based apps in the future as wireless bandwidth continues to improve. Smartphones and now tablets are part of the mobile landscape and they all need to be supported. Unlike what the competing mobile operating system vendors might say, I don't believe a single standard will evolve. I believe there will be at least several competing architectures that will exist in the mobile space.

I believe the biggest application/solution vendor winners in this move to the cloud and mobile will be those that focus on their customers needs, refining their offerings on an almost-daily basis to meet the diverse and ever-evolving needs of their customers. I don't believe saying "our features are fixed and you'll have to work with that or wait for a new release in three months" will work in the future. It's not the path at Nexonia as we're already doing feature updates several times a week, and I believe the larger software industry will have to follow this path as well. Customers are demanding of cloud solutions, as they should be. It's their business that we need to support and not the other way around. This rapid-change model requires an intimate understanding of a customer's needs and actively listening to requests and elegantly designing refinements to support them. Successful vendors will understand this and be able to act on it effectively.

Taking a world view, companies will move to buying more and more bandwidth for their offices and employee's homes. The selection of office locations, business regions to enter, hotels, vacation destinations and even the choice of where an employee lives will be affected by available bandwidth is and how much it costs. It's going on now and will become even more important over the coming years. I personally believe some of the most successful economies of the future will center on extremely fast (when measured against other economies, not against prior years) and affordable access to the Internet. Countries and governments that don't make this a priority will be at a significant disadvantage in the world economy.

I'm excited by what the move to cloud and mobile will do for the world economy. The barriers for businesses to start and grow will be significantly reduced as their infrastructure/solution needs can be met by easily accessible cloud solutions. This means a more efficient and high-growth world economy, and we'll all benefit from it.

Finally and as we all know from being in the software industry, the only constant is change. New architectures, new alliances, acquisitions and market-disrupting solutions have always been there in the past and will continue to exist in the future. If you like constant change, software is the place to be.

*This interview was published in SIIA's [Vision from the Top](#) , a Software Division publication released at [All About the Cloud](#) 2011.*