



*What will the software industry look like in 3, 5, even 10 years from now? And what customer demands and business trends will drive changes in software products, how they're developed, and the industry that provides them?*

Given the dynamics of innovation and ever-changing user landscape, in many ways it's difficult to predict what the software industry will look like in 3 years let alone 5 or 10 years. With this said, however, here are some thoughts for consideration.

**Security:** Security will ultimately be linked more often to an individual's biometric markers. The trend continues towards multi-factor authentication where both physical and virtual considerations prevail. As advancements in security technology are achieved, cyber criminals will also continue to advance and keep this segment of the software industry ever-changing.

**Private, Public and/or Hybrid Clouds:** The existence of all three may very well be a reality for years to come. With most business decisions, associated risk must be well balanced with specific technology advancements to determine appropriate IT decisions. When it comes to private and public clouds, attention will remain focused around the sensitivity of intellectual property and related data which is collected, processed and stored. By simple categorization, valuable intellectual property and/or sensitive data which might be subject to too much risk in a public cloud will continue to remain in private clouds both physically and logically separated from other types of information and services.

**Mobile:** The so called "third screen" has come a long way. In fact, most experts suggest more transactions will take place on mobile devices than on PCs in years to come. Although advertising dollars currently dominate revenue models, more value will be placed on consumer and business applications by merchants who will be willing to "pay-to-play" so long as compliance and other factors can be overcome. Simply put the convenience and value of having access to more accurate, complete and timely information from a consumer's perspective will be more equally balanced by the value provided to merchants in distributing products and services more effectively. The greatest challenge will remain categorization in the sense there needs to be an adequate pairing of products and services for each segment of consumers in order to create a strong enough value proposition for both consumers and merchants.

**Social Media impact on Sales and Marketing:** The software industry continues to experience the broad impact of social media on sales and marketing. As the use of social media on a personal level continues to accelerate, individuals and their employers will begin to accept social media and associated technologies within their work environment. Adoption will continue with the exchange of business information for enhanced decision making (customer relationship management applications, etc.), and will ultimately lead towards consumption of consumer products and services in the workplace, including areas such as voluntary insurance, group rates for educational and entertainment events and other similar areas. The technology is here, the monetization or cost offsetting ability on the employer level and potential disruption to worksite productivity needs to be more fully understood before mass adoption will occur.

**Long-term predictions on the future of Software:** It is said that at any point, if someone gets a brilliant idea, two other people in the world get the same idea at the same time. Ideas will become cheaper and more readily available. Software will continue to help abstract much of the thinking behind and completion of processes that are necessary to perform tasks more efficiently. Emphasis will continue to be placed on improving user experience, where application user interfaces will become more intuitive and replace the need for online help and other forms of user documentation. Software will also continue to incorporate collaborative elements such as crowd sourcing and will evolve in response to the trend of information sharing.

**Intellectual Property:** An interesting aspect of the future of software is the question, "What types of devices and products will evolve to a point where software drives their use?" For instance, our vehicle can tell us where we are through global positioning or let us know when our vehicle's tires are low on air, with software potentially being a key component to how this technology evolves. Recently, vehicles are being equipped with software technology to avoid collisions and change handling capabilities depending on driving conditions. Who's to say in the

next several decades our vehicles won't be performing most of the driving for us, and if so, using software as a service (SaaS) via the cloud, will this mean our vehicles will require security software to protect against viruses???

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