



*What will the software industry look like in 3, 5, even 10 years from now?*

The biggest shift in the software industry is happening right now - the global shift to Cloud Computing - and the results will become very clear over the next 10 years. The definitive end of the Client-Server model that has been the most significant in the past 20 years after the mainframe and mini computer era.

In some markets this transition is taking place very quickly, in other more traditional markets it will take longer. The trend started with social media, followed by email and CRM, and it is now getting to the stage where general business software including ERP is moving to Cloud Computing environments. The benefits to the user are of such importance that this transition is taking place at a much faster pace than was originally predicted. For new companies the best solution choice is to go with Cloud

(SaaS) only, and not worry about on-premise software at all. For existing companies with an existing installed base, the most viable option is to choose a hybrid solution: continue the on-premise version in addition to rolling out an online platform, ideally from a single code-base to avoid doubling the development, testing and support effort.

For startup companies that develop software from scratch this provides less of a challenge than for the traditional ISV. At Servoy we have developed a toolset to specifically assist companies by making this transition fast, seamless and risk-free. This allows companies to move swiftly to a hybrid model without taking more risk than necessary. We're quite proud to have helped more than 300 ISV's in the past three years to successfully make this transition.

*And what customer demands and business trends will drive changes in software products, how they're developed, and the industry that provides them?*

Cost reduction and ease of use are the key trends.

Cost reduction of software can be achieved by using more effective and modern development tools, increasing the customers base, including more services such as hosting of the application and cutting out unnecessary clutter. For example, many products rely on Terminal Services or Citrix to deploy over the internet. With modern tools (such as Servoy amongst others) this is not necessary and can immediately reduce the cost to an ISV by literally hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Ease of use is reflected in many parts of the software, but none more so than the initial look and feel. Many software companies try to develop the user interface in-house, however it is often much more cost effective to work with a design company to build a modern, sexy look and feel. In today's world of the iPhone and iPad, sexy user interfaces are critical in making sales. With social media being the first software application that many people interact with, it is key to be inspired by how easy it is to start using that kind of application. The software industry can learn a great deal from the world of social media, for example, is it really necessary to have 200 fields on the screen, or can they be reduced to the 10 that the user actually needs? Such reductions not only make the software easier to use, but also reduce training and support costs. Additionally, as they will create a much lower load on infrastructure they provide the benefit of being much greener.

ISV's should not be afraid of, or worried about, these challenges that lie ahead. Instead they should show vision and invest in the redevelopment of their software. There will be some initial pain, but this is the only option to be successful in the Cloud Computing Era that lies ahead of us.

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