

Understanding what makes software enterprise-ready

Enterprises require solutions that meet their unique requirements. Irrespective of whether it is enterprise application software (EAS) or software-as-a-service (SaaS), according to Ian McAlister, general manager at CRS Technologies, an enterprise-focused approach is fundamental to business success in the digital world.



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Contrary to software for small to medium businesses, EAS is used to satisfy the needs of an organisation rather than individual users. This can include private or public sector entities. Services provided by enterprise software are typically business-oriented tools, such as online shopping and online payment processing, interactive product catalogues, automated billing systems, security, business process management, and enterprise content management.

“As enterprises have similar departments and systems in common, enterprise software is often available as a suite of configurable programmes. It is in this configurability where organisations can unlock the true potential of the software. Off-the-shelf solutions might work well for smaller companies, but large entities require sophisticated tools capable of managing their growth demands,” says McAlister.

SaaS is a popular option for users needing to take care of a very specific purpose. In this software model, users typically rent the software and never own it. SaaS is often hosted in the cloud, requiring users to be connected to the internet to use the software and access the data.



SaaS implementation is key to business survival

23 May 2019



“While SaaS can provide quick universal access to software that offers specific actions, traditionally its drawbacks include lack of configuration. This means it cannot be specific enough for large-scale, enterprise-wide implementations. Yes, this approach is convenient and quick to implement, but the long-term ramifications far outweigh any immediate gains,” McAlister continues.

In terms of configuration, EAS is typically owned outright, giving users considerably more parameterisation ability. Enterprises often have in-house developers and programmers configure the software according to predetermined parameters to make it match enterprise needs.

“Given this flexibility, developers can more easily adapt the solutions to any problems that may incur during implementation or when the needs of the organisation change. It gives decision-makers the freedom to tweak as their strategy evolves, while the scalability inherent to EAS makes it a perfect fit.”

EAS is generally hosted on physical servers and the software relies on a computer network to connect to its many users. Some parts of the software may also rely on intranet and occasionally internet connections. Because enterprise software installs directly on organisational servers, the connection is generally more private and secure.

Recent years have seen SaaS offerings designed for the scalability and customisation required in enterprises. The arrival of multinational data centres in South Africa has given further impetus to a richer SaaS experience for enterprises.

“Yet, many decision-makers want to keep their mission-critical information and solutions on their own servers, given the privacy and security concerns of transferring information to the cloud. Additionally, with the complexities of the continually changing regulatory environment to consider, they feel more comfortable being in control of where their data is stored and how it is managed,” adds McAlister.

“Consequently, enterprises must carefully evaluate their software requirements and expectations. Chances are, the smaller business-focused offerings will simply not be up to the task,” he concludes.

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