

What is SaaS?

SaaS: Software-as-a-Service

“SaaS” stands for “Software-as-a-Service”, and is a method of delivering software.

Traditionally, software has been installed on computers – or more recently, companies have installed software on servers and allowed end users to access it through browsers. SaaS enables end users to access the same software via a browser – but the software itself is hosted by the vendor.

Examples of SaaS

SaaS is a ubiquitous delivery method even for critical business applications, but end users are often unaware that the software they’re using employs SaaS delivery.

The following are common examples of SaaS

- Gmail
- Salesforce.com
- Google Docs
- NetSuite

Advantages of SaaS

SaaS offers the organisation a number of advantages over desktop or in-house server-based software, including:

- **No software or hardware to purchase, install or maintain**
Eliminating the need for specialist servers and software in-house reduces the strain on the IT department, and reduces the financial outlay required.
- **Rapid deployment**
With no onsite installation, deployment times are reduced from several weeks or months to a matter of hours, or even instant access. Giving end users faster access to the software improves their experience and speeds up positive ROI for the customer organisation.
- **Up-to-date – but upgrade-free – software**
Because SaaS vendors seamlessly upgrade their software, customer organisations always have access to the most up-to-date version of the software – without painful upgrade cycles.
- **Lower, subscription-based pricing**
Paying a low monthly price per user dramatically lowers costs, and provides predictability for

forecasting.

SaaS and piloting new software

The decision to pilot new software is not one taken lightly, particularly in light of the substantial costs and labour involved in a traditional software pilot.

In sharp contrast, SaaS is ideally suited to organisations interested in piloting new software, particularly if the software is seen as somewhat niche, or the business case for the application lacks ROI data.

Particular benefits include:

- **No-strings pilot environment**
The biggest commitment a SaaS vendor requires is a contract for service for an agreed term – a far cry from the commitments involved in purchasing hardware and software licenses to host in-house.
- **Low-level investment and predictable costs**
Employing a per user, per month subscription-based model provides the customer organisation with an inexpensive option for trying new software – and predictability for forecasting.
- **Flexibility and scalability**
The flexibility and scalability of SaaS makes it easy for the customer organisation to increase the number of end users as a pilot gains momentum, or a decision is taken to roll the software out organisation-wide.

How SaaS and GIS work together

While using a Geographic Information System (GIS) has traditionally involved either desktop or in-house server-based installations, it is very well-suited to SaaS delivery.

A GIS delivered via SaaS provides a familiar browser-based interface and the same full functionality. The main difference is that the application is hosted by a provider, who is responsible for maintaining the software and hosted environment.

This means that the customer organisation is free from the financial and technical responsibilities associated with purchasing and maintaining hardware and software licenses. Up-time is guaranteed via a provider SLA, and is typically very close to 100% - far in excess of what many in-house teams can guarantee.

A GIS delivered via SaaS also provides major benefits in terms of flexibility of access. End users can access the software from any Internet-connected computer without requiring a VPN or other complex additional procedures. This flexibility makes it easy for employees who work from home, are travelling, or are in remote locations.

About eSpatial OnDemand GIS™

eSpatial OnDemand GIS combines the latest innovations in software delivery and usability with the traditional performance of in-house GIS, over the web.

eSpatial OnDemand GIS is an affordable, predictable, and scalable web GIS offering which provides an ideal enterprise grade hosted services delivery platform for geospatial applications.



About eSpatial

eSpatial is a leading provider of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and a pioneer in the provision of location intelligence delivered via Software-as-a-Service (SaaS).

Our flagship product, eSpatial OnDemand GIS, is the world's first full-function available via SaaS delivery. It combines the latest innovations in software delivery and usability with the traditional performance of in-house GIS, over the web.

We are proud to work with leading technology partners such as Oracle, NAVTEQ and Digital Globe; and to count many leading organisations amongst our global customer base.

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