

IMPACT OF SOFTWARE AS A SERVICE (SaaS) ON SOFTWARE ACQUISITION PROCESS



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Abstract

Organizations worldwide are adopting Software as a Service applications, where they pay a subscription fee to gain access rather than buying the software, hardware, and allied services to run their applications. The existing models, several of which are based on Organizational Buying Behaviour, do not sufficiently explain how SaaS application acquisition decisions are made nor do they explain how the roles and responsibilities of the members of the buying centres have changed.

We conducted an exploratory research using grounded theory approach and used in-depth interviews as the means to collect data from 15 respondents who have worked with on-premise and SaaS in different roles such as Sales, Consulting and Product Development.

Through this study, we identified a need to classify the SaaS software and developed a framework that uses software specificity and its strategic importance to the organization to classify SaaS applications. The CIO who used to wield a lot of influence in on-premise software evaluations has seen his/her influence and role change substantially in SaaS evaluations. The role of the business users in the evaluation has also changed significantly from being a passive participant to one who performs active information search through SaaS trials and sometimes drives the whole evaluation process.

The study analyzed SaaS acquisition processes, and identified changes to the roles and responsibilities of the members of the buying center. An understanding of how information search is conducted by the business users will help software vendors to target business users, and partner with the CIOs to tailor their sales and marketing strategies.

Key Words: Software-as-a-Service, Software Selection, Organizational Buying Behaviour, SaaS, Stealth Adoption, Grounded Theory

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