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## Why would a business change the delivery of its IT Systems?

*The advent of SaaS (Software as a Service) delivery of computing power to businesses has some compelling benefits to offer any organisation. So what would make someone throw out their IT servers and put all their IT in the Cloud?*

*Jonathan Dawkins, Managed Services Consultant of Ardent24 discusses what the triggers are for businesses that have become early adopters of this new technology.*

### All fuss and no fruition

For the past four to five years the buzz word on everyone's lips in the IT industry has been SaaS. Whilst industry experts and leading IT authors have been writing, blogging and even tweeting about the growth of SaaS and the latest benefits for those in 'the Cloud', the recession has far from brought the surge in SaaS uptake many expected.

Latest figures show that there are currently over 4.8 million\* SMEs operating within the UK. As many continue to feel the pressure of the current economic climate, these small businesses are looking closer than ever at their IT spend and trying to squeeze every last ounce of life from their existing systems – even though managers realise that IT budget cuts will impact on system reliability and increase the amount of downtime.

Most business owners have had the benefits of opting for a hosted managed service pressed upon them; significant cost savings, an improved IT infrastructure, increased data security and enhanced, efficient business processes. However the challenge is understanding how these benefits can relate to their business and any complexities they feel they have.

### SaaS for the SME

There is a common misconception amongst SMEs that SaaS is only relevant to larger organisations. The benefits are clear for the large company that has multiple servers, hundreds of applications and sophisticated IT systems; but what about the small business with only one or 2 servers and no dedicated IT personnel?

A key advantage of SaaS is its flexibility; irrespective of size organisations can have the IT infrastructure that matches their individual business needs. Increasing productivity and business efficiency is a key objective for all businesses – and understanding how IT can help is fundamental to achieving this.

By opting for a hosted managed service, SMEs benefit from having the latest software products and leading edge technology at a fixed monthly cost. This enables the business to pinpoint its exact IT overhead each month and ensures the organisation runs as effectively and efficiently as possible.

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However, it is important that SaaS is not just viewed as a cheap way of renting software. Whilst it is a cost effective way of paying for software, it is critically about utilising a different deployment method for the company's IT.

### **The wider business issues**

One issue that many small companies running their IT system internally face is how to deal with the shortages that occur when key members of staff take time off for holidays and sickness. In an SME the loss of just one IT person for any length of time can have a dramatic impact on the business. However, with a SaaS model businesses can feel confident that the hosted supplier will always deliver a high level of service regardless of staff absences.

And that's not all. SaaS suppliers have invested heavily and often spent in excess of six-figure sums on providing a safe and secure data environment. With highly-secure data centres, back-up systems and quality hardware, 24/7 security patrols and complete CCTV coverage, SMEs can take advantage of the highest levels of data security that would otherwise be out of their reach.

With the SaaS trend set to continue, SMEs must now realise the huge benefits that this type of service can bring to their business. But where to start? By speaking directly to the current IT supplier, SMEs can fully understand how SaaS can benefit them and how this model can effectively meet their individual business requirements.

Whilst many SMEs are experiencing dark times, particularly when it comes to IT, there is light at the end of the tunnel...in the shape of SaaS!