

GOING LIVE IN THE CLOUD : ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF ENTERPRISE SOFTWARE IMPLEMENTATION MODELS BETWEEN CLOUD BASED AND ON PREMISE SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

This paper will analyze the claims made by many Software as a Service (SaaS) vendors that implementing their solution is quicker and cheaper than similar on premise solutions. SaaS solutions run the gamut from specific point products, such as telephony expense management, to full scale Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems. Traditionally, ERP implementations require large efforts to implement at a corporation – on the order of 18 months manpower duration and millions of dollars in cost. SaaS or Cloud based solutions promise to reduce this effort and enable their customer to “Go Live” much quicker. This case study will analyze the typical phases of implementation projects and compare the traditional On Premise option versus the Cloud/SaaS based alternative.

The case focuses on two high profile SaaS vendors, Workday Inc and Salesforce.com, as well as other smaller vendors. The author decomposes the project phases of “Go Live” beginning with the software evaluation, moving through business process re-engineering, software configuration, testing, training, and ending with user acceptance. These are generally accepted implementation phases for large scale software systems. Each phase will address the issues that occur for On Premise implementations versus the suppliers in the study. The author has reviewed implementation methodologies from the subject vendors as well as interviewed customers that are currently using the software. These details will be presented in the case study paper. The paper will also address issues, such as system security, that become more complicated in Cloud based computing. These issues impact the Go Live project plan and are usually not addressed by the SaaS vendors. Finally, the paper will review current trends with SaaS adoption rates.

Key Words: ERP, Information Systems Implementation, Cloud Computing, SaaS, Technology Management