SaaS Advantage

Releasing Software under the Software as a Service Hosted Delivery Model

The purpose of this paper is to provide a concrete example as to the benefits of selecting an integrated library system (ILS) via the Software as a Service (SaaS) hosted delivery model versus a locally installed system. All software companies release enhancements and new features to their ILS system on a regular basis.

For those libraries that select the SaaS model, those updates are usually done overnight or during non peak periods. Generally when the library staff returns to the library the morning following a new release, they simply log-into the system and all updates and new features are instantly accessible from the web.

For libraries that have selected a locally installed system, updates need to be loaded onto their servers by technical staff at the library and this must be replicated for all branches and other locations. This process can be tedious and time consuming and require intensive man hours, schedule coordination and possible over-time approval if there are any issues with the new release and its configuration on the server.

In a recent software release by Auto-Graphics, despite extensive QA testing, there were problems with the release. The issue was with a piece of code that loops to resize the Holdings Grid on the Results View. It was in this code where, under certain conditions relating to screen size, resolution, and the information regarding a specific holdings that the display would go into loop and cause the browser to hang.

Only some of Auto-Graphics' customers were experiencing this problem since this loop takes into account the resolution of the user's computer as well as the data that comes back on the search result. The end result for those customers affected was the inability to view the results of some searches, which is a mission critical step in the workflow process for libraries and patrons.

The new software was released late on a Sunday evening. The problem was initially reported Monday night at 5:02 PM by an affected customer via the company's user group list serv. By Tuesday morning at 8:19 AM one other library reported the same issue via the listserv. Auto-Graphics established a remote connection to one of the library's computers to view the problem.

Based on what the Auto-Graphics customer service team observed, the issue was turned over to development at about 9:30 AM on Tuesday morning. The programming team had replicated the problem by 10:30 AM and had isolated the area of the code that need to be corrected. At about 12:30 PM a correction to the code was released to quality assurance. The corrected software was released to all AGent VERSO SaaS customers Tuesday at 3:20 PM. By 5:00 PM the issue was resolved and customers were reporting that the problem was fixed.

This quick turnaround and responsiveness to fix an issue with a software release is possible with SaaS. In less than 24 hours from the announcement of an issue, new code was

developed, tested and implemented so that the affected libraries were able to use their system to its full capacity.

This would have been a different scenario if the systems were locally installed, in which case the fix would have been delivered to the library, implemented by technical staff and then replicated to other branches. This process could have taken additional days as opposed the speed and flexibility available with the SaaS delivery model.

Auto-Graphics never wants to have problems with its software releases. However, the management acknowledges that this is an eventuality due to the variations in browsers, computers and operating systems that both staff and patrons use. The SaaS delivery model ensures that critical issues can be diagnosed and corrected quickly and efficiently with corrections and enhancements made immediately available to all users.

Auto·Graphics

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