Moving Network Management from OnSite to SaaS

Key Challenges—and How NMSaaS Helps Solve Them

Executive Summary

In areas such as sales force automation and customer relationship management, cloud-based computing services have become the norm—and substantially improved the economics, capabilities, and efficiencies enterprises have realized. Organizations can enjoy similarly substantial benefits by migrating their network management functions to a software-as-a-service, cloud-based model. This paper shows how NMSaaS enables organizations to make the most of this opportunity.

Introduction: Opportunities of SaaS

Over previous decades, IT has continued to evolve—perhaps just never as quickly as it's changing today. From the mainframe to client/server, from ASP models to the cloud, these transitions radically affected the way business services were supported. As dramatic as these prior changes were, the cloud, and software as a service (SaaS) in particular, will have the fastest, most dramatic, and longest lasting impact of any modern computing trend that we have seen. As an example, computing, in the enterprise, is much like a tool you use for business productivity. Unless you are a manufacturer of computers, you would acquire/purchase that tool to meet the demands of business. You would not build it yourself. A residential customer typically doesn't grow their own food – it makes more sense to acquire from a mass-producer with greater economies of scale. Ultimately, for just about every business, the reliance on an external resource makes the most sense. The business does not product their own electricity, or water - similarly, the move to SaaS will be a compelling opportunity for a great many organizations—though clearly not all, and not necessarily for all use cases.

When assessing the potential value of new service delivery models, it's important to realize that, fundamentally, it's the delivery of business services that is the end goal, not supporting the technical infrastructure used to power the service. This represents a fundamental paradigm shift for IT organizations, whose charters and objectives have traditionally have been focused on the infrastructures they built and supported. The ability for IT to affordably meet real business needs and support those needs as they change is ultimately what is most critical. When considering a move to SaaS, it is important to do so with the support of business services in mind. When it comes to migrating an existing business service to a SaaS model, the IT network management category presents a significant opportunity for many organizations. Following are a few key reasons:

- For most IT groups, managing a tool that's used to support a business process is not a core charter. As a result, supporting an on-premise network management platform increasingly represents a distraction, hindering the IT group from meeting its primary objectives.

- Network management is a business process tool, just like sales force automation and customer relationship management—applications that have been successfully delivered via SaaS models for many years.

Typically, there aren't interconnectivity and bandwidth issues associated with migrating service management to SaaS. Secure connections can typically be managed through the firewall, even for remote users.

In areas such as sales force automation and customer relationship management, cloud-based computing services have become the norm—and substantially improved the economics, capabilities, and efficiencies customers have realized. Today, organizations can enjoy similarly substantial benefits by migrating their IT network management functions to a software-as-a-service model.

The Business and Operational Benefits of NMSaaS

Eliminate the Cost and Distraction of Platform Maintenance

Running a network management system in-house takes the time and effort of system administrators and application specialists focused on configuring, administering, and customizing the platform. Ultimately, IT organizations dedicate a lot of specialized team members just to keep the tools running. Beyond the fact that these resources can't be focused on more strategic efforts, having shared internal resources can also pose complications when modifications or updates to the tool are needed. For example, a given network administrator will typically be responsible for supporting the server associated with the network management platform, as well as many other servers – plus being responsible for resolving issues the network management platform identifies. If an urgent update arises, that administrator may have a hard time getting away from other responsibilities to install it in a reasonable timeframe, or may not be available at all if the organization is inadequately staffed.

Minimize Upgrade Costs and Disruptions

When it comes to enterprise software, it is vital to stay current with the latest versions, so the business can benefit from the advances and updates available, and ultimately enjoy the process and efficiency improvements that result. However, upgrades of enterprise software have traditionally represented a significant burden for IT organizations. Rolling out a new version requires significant effort – documentation for procurement, deployment to both testing and production environments, testing, change control downtime windows, and more. With NMSaaS, you always have the latest software version—automatically. The solution eliminates the need to have to allocate time, money, and people to internal upgrades.

Introducing NMSaaS

NMSaaS is a SaaS-based IT network management platform. NMSaaS enables your organization to leverage sophisticated IT network management capabilities and tailor them to the specific needs of your business - without complex, labor-intensive customization, and all its time and budget implications. NMSaaS offers a range of features that make it ideally suited to helping your organization maximize the potential benefits of a SaaS solution. With NMSaaS, organizations can eliminate the time, cost, effort, and distraction associated with running and supporting network management platforms internally, while still getting all the key management capabilities required. As a result, IT organizations can be more focused, and better aligned with strategic business priorities and objectives.

Leverage a True SaaS Solution

NMSaaS can be tailored to the specific needs of your business, without requiring any of this labor-intensive customization. As a result, you can deploy NMSaaS quickly, and easily apply changes as business needs evolve. Simply having your on-premise solution outsourced to a hosting provider can deliver a range of potential benefits, but it wouldn't match the potential upside of a true SaaS solution. Following are a few examples of how NMSaaS maximizes the benefits of a SaaS model:

- **Infrastructure scalability.** Traditional on-premise software was architected for a dedicated hardware platform and server. Consequently, setting up and expanding these applications require a manual process that doesn't scale easily. Having on-premise applications hosted with a hosting provider is analogous to the early ASP models, where vendors provided economies of scale to customers by serving the same software to many customers.

- **True multi-tenant architecture saves costs**. For a SaaS provider, true multi-tenancy is critical: the entire delivery model by definition has to support multiple clients to facilitate scalability and efficiently reduce staffing and administrative costs. By eliminating the time and resources dedicated to implementing and maintaining an on-premise solution, organizations can reduce staffing costs or redeploy staff to more strategic endeavors for the business. While any application will require some level of administration on the customer's part, many administrative costs go away with SaaS. For example, hardware upgrade costs and effort are eliminated. The fact that an organization doesn't need to make the big up-front investment in infrastructure, or pay to support that infrastructure over the long term, presents a host of near-term and long-term dividends.

- **Decreased capital costs**. Deploying any cloud service means changing from managing an expensive infrastructure and incurring capital expenditures to the simple operating expense of a pay-as-you-go service. When one application is migrated to an external cloud provider, the infrastructure required to support that application, including servers, databases, and processors, goes away or gets reallocated.

NMSaaS was architected for SaaS delivery, offering the scalability to easily accommodate many customers, so we can leverage the economies of scale that yield significant efficiency and cost savings for our customers.

Compared to traditional on premise enterprise software, which often has upgrades occurring every year or two, NMSaaS is upgraded far more frequently. Not only do these incremental upgrades happen automatically for customers, but they are far less disruptive than major upgrades, which can require end user re-training and adversely affect end-user productivity.

The Financial Benefits of NMSaaS

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Predictable, device-based pricing. As opposed to having to make a large up-front investment and pay for that infrastructure regardless of how much it's used at any given time, NMSaaS offers a predictable, usage-based billing model, so customers only pay for the capacity they need, when they need it, and nothing more.

Cost of ownership advantages. With an on-premise solution, administrative and customization costs are ongoing. Some have made the argument that, given the way SaaS is priced, after three years of subscribing, an organization may have paid the same amount that they would have paid by purchasing a traditional software license. That reasoning fails to recognize that after three years, an organization would most likely need to invest significant money and resources in a major upgrade to the on-premise platform, including upgrading hardware, software, and so on. Given that the up-front purchase cost is only the beginning of the expenses associated with an on-premise platform, NMSaaS still provides significant cost advantages, even if a platform has already been paid for and deployed.

About NMSaaS

NMSaaS provides integrated, modern IT management solutions for enterprise and service provider customers globally. The platform is an industry-leading solution that helps organizations easily monitor and manage IT services in increasingly complex business environments. NMSaaS products are usage-based by the number of network devices, and are available on a pay-as-you-go basis.

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