



In the next five years, which software related businesses will grow faster or slower than others and why?

I've been fortunate in my career to work with and lead several high growth software companies and undoubtedly the past 12-15 months has been an exciting time to be part of the burgeoning technology sector. With a surge in growth for many software companies, some have questioned if the technology and investing bubble might be ready to burst. While the economy hasn't been as strong as we would all like it to be, the software industry remains a definite bright spot. Companies are continuing to invest heavily in technology, specifically Software-as-a-Service (SaaS). SaaS related businesses will absolutely grow faster than others in the software space. The cloud is nothing new but businesses have finally reached the acceptance stage. Analyst firms including Forrester and Gartner forecast the SaaS industry to be around \$16 billion in 2013. From what we've all witnessed in 2012, this isn't surprising. Companies such as ServiceNow and Cornerstone OnDemand are experiencing tremendous growth with no signs of slowing down.

I think we'll see quite a few SaaS IPOs in 2013. Spunk and Workday had stellar IPOs last year – both companies are SaaS. At Eloqua, now a wholly owned subsidiary of Oracle, we had our own successful IPO in 2012, providing further proof that the investment community looks favorably on SaaS software.

Of these fast growing SaaS companies, I see a particular trend emerging around “openness” and the ability for applications from one company to easily connect or plug in to applications from several other companies. This happens often in the B2C world where, for example my Spotify account is connected to Facebook, sharing my music preferences with my friends and followers. Another example might be how Instapaper can automatically archive articles in Evernote. The B2B side has been slower to adapt and typically our applications live in silos.

Google understands this open concept with its Google apps. At Eloqua we created something called the Eloqua AppCloud where a marketer can connect the applications they use every day with the Eloqua platform. For example, a marketer might connect their webinar platform (ON24, ReadyTalk, WebEx) directly with Eloqua. By connecting the applications, data can easily flow from one system to the next. Companies that embrace this kind of connectivity and integration will improve the overall user experience and are more likely to win their markets.

In the same vein of companies integrating to make life easier for end users, I see huge growth potential for software companies that address collaboration and productivity in the workplace. Okta is one such company. Okta, an identity and access management platform for SaaS applications, improves employee efficiency through single sign-on which grants employees access to all their web applications in one place. Box, another hot SaaS company, is a collaboration tool for content sharing. As our co-workers travel, telecommute and work around the world, Box provides an easily accessible file system for teams to instantly share information. These applications are drastically changing the way we work.

Telecommuting and travel instantly bring us to mobile. We frequently hear lots of amazing statistics related to mobile. There are more mobile phones in the world than toothbrushes! Or that 91 percent of U.S. citizens report having their mobile device within reach 24/7. It's obvious then that the software industry is focused on all things mobile and that there are tremendous opportunities for software companies involved in the mobile space to grow.

I look forward to the impending innovation that we'll see from SaaS companies. Five years from now, I hope to be easily collaborating with my fellow co-workers in a connected environment where applications speak to each other - most likely, on my mobile device.

This interview was published in [SIIA's Vision from the Top](#), a Software Division publication released at [All About the Cloud 2013](#).