



*What will the software industry look like in 3, 5, even 10 years from now?*

Enterprise customers have learned that, for many applications, software that is light and nimble can support even the most complex business processes. I see enterprise software continuing to become more specialized and better tailored to address specific business problems while offering customers flexibility to innovate and customize on top of the off-the-shelf capabilities. This shift will have an incredible impact on the public sector clients that GovDelivery serves.

From the largest federal agencies to the smallest cities, public sector organizations have an opportunity to transition technology from a support function to a strategic function. In some cases this will mean leaving behind legacy systems and bringing new systems online that support mission results. Software can be more specialized now because disparate and specialized systems are increasingly able to work seamlessly together due to Web services and other tools. Our industry should continue to focus on integration options that allow each of our solutions to work well with solutions created by other providers or custom-built by our customers.

*And what customer demands and business trends will drive changes in software products, how they're developed, and the industry that provides them?*

Even five years ago, enterprise customers, including our public sector client base, were accustomed to delayed deployments and software that lived up to some, but not all, of its promise. Those days are rapidly coming to an end. This change is driven by the openness with which most software companies now operate and the high standards we must live up to in order to gain traction in the market. Recent trends, like the rapid adoption of software as a service and other forms of cloud computing have brought the customer and provider together in an ongoing partnership. The SaaS business model creates a healthy incentive for customers to provide regular and actionable feedback, and for providers to deliver high quality support and ongoing innovation. Software as a Service companies like ours can see when clients are struggling to use our system well, and we're likely to pick up the phone and help them before they even think to call us. Our success depends on taking ownership for the results our clients achieve with the software we provide to them.

Another important trend is the growing adoption of open source technologies, both by our customers and our industry. Our company takes advantage of many open source technologies today, but we know that for enterprise solutions, both open source and commercial options require a support structure behind them. Open source software requires more staff and integrator support over time which raises the total cost of ownership in comparison with commercial software. For this reason, I believe that customer-focused commercial software providers are in a great position to deliver amazing value even as the customer gains influence and considers open source.

*This interview was published in SIIA's [Vision from the Top](#) , a Software Division publication released at [All About the Cloud](#) 2011.*