

## Getting SaaS ready is easy for some

SaaS (Software as a Service) is flourishing. More and more companies are turning to SaaS and other on-demand solutions to respond to business needs faster and more cheaply. SaaS is a software delivery model in which software and associated data are centrally hosted on the Cloud and accessed through a Web browser. Customers pay only for what they use and can configure their own environment via a self-service model.

Simple examples of SaaS are web-based email systems such as Hotmail, Gmail and Office365, mostly targeted at consumers. Payroll and Human Resource Management systems have been long-time proponents of SaaS. Salesforce.com is a SaaS-based CRM system. Today there are SaaS offerings for almost every application type, with several ERP and Marketing Automation solutions in the SaaS Top 10.

**From the customer's point of view,** by eliminating the need to install and run applications in-house, SaaS lessens the burden of ongoing hardware and software maintenance, operation and support. SaaS also reduces the up-front expense of software license purchases, replacing it with subscription-model and/or on-demand pricing. Additionally, SaaS and other cloud and hosting services take high availability and disaster recovery planning to the level of a professional data center.

SaaS also has its detractors. Some may worry about security and safety, the level of legal protection in the country where their solution is hosted, the lack of opportunity to customize the solution and the feeling of not being in control of upgrades and new releases.

**From the software vendor's standpoint,** SaaS has the attraction of tapping into a larger market (not restricted by hardware or operating system), establishing an ongoing revenue stream, easier roll-out of new software releases and stronger protection of intellectual property.

Preparing applications for SaaS readiness is not as simple as Web enabling a solution. A true SaaS application has a multi-tenant architecture. The ability to have multiple organizations (called tenants in the Cloud nomenclature) co-exist on the same application instance, without compromising the security of data for those organizations, defines the application as multi-tenanted.



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**Marjanna Frank**  
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### Why IBM i and Why LANS?

This showcase contains interviews with several independent software vendors (ISVs) who explain their experience with SaaS, specifically where they used LANS to develop their SaaS solution or aXes to provide access.

All interviewed ISVs agree that IBM i is an excellent platform for SaaS. The IBM i architecture with its library lists, security levels and many other features is "made for SaaS".

ISVs also commented that LANS's application architecture makes delivering SaaS easy. On the server side, LANS automatically handles multi-user access and multi-tenancy. LANS manages a single instance of an application shared by concurrent users, creating different library lists to establish separate, secure logical databases. On the client side, LANS's visual framework enables a rich, Windows-like user interface to be run inside a standard browser.

Of course it is also a matter of good design, but LANS does make it straightforward to build flexible and parameterized applications that may look and behave quite differently depending on the user profile, even presenting in a different language using LANS's multilingual facilities. Any web content, SOA component, 5250 screen, ActiveX control or Web service can be snapped into the LANS framework.

### Human Resource Management

**NorthgateArinso** (NGA) is a leading global Human Resources (HR) services provider offering innovative HR business solutions. In 2010 NGA acquired Neller, a leading provider of Payroll, HR and Labor Management systems for the Australian and New Zealand marketplace since 1976. Neller had experienced stellar growth with its set of Preceda solutions, counting over 1100 customers at the time of the takeover.

In the late 1990s, Neller's growth began to ease, simply because the Preceda offering already dominated its segment. Preceda ran only

on IBM AS/400 computers. To get a foothold in the wider market, independent of server platform or company size, Neller decided to offer Preceda as a SaaS application. Having already successfully used LANSAs to provide a Web front-end to its installed base, LANSAs was selected for the hosted environment.

The new offering, then called Preceda Hosted, has been a very profitable business model, adding a new high-growth revenue stream to Neller's existing business. From 2001 to 2010 the number of Preceda customers tripled and the SaaS offering now contributes over 70% of Preceda revenue. Today the solution is called Preceda OnDemand, and with NGA's backing and state-of-the-art data centers, continues to grow strongly. NGA has also introduced the Preceda SaaS offering in Asia and Europe, and in the U.K. adoption has been especially rapid.

Sam Xydias, Vice President, Regional Products Engineering at NorthgateArinso, said, "Preceda OnDemand is a perfect fit for organizations looking to realize the benefits of a comprehensive HR system without the associated IT overheads. On the server side, LANSAs and IBM i are a natural fit to securely handle multi-tenancy. On the client side, LANSAs's browser interface means there is nothing to install. The combination of being developed in LANSAs and deployed on proven and virus-resistant IBM server technology, provides a rock-solid technology platform that consistently delivers very high standards in service availability."

**Nippon Dynamic Systems (NDS)** is a well-known Japanese software house, IBM Business Partner and ISV. Its ISV activities focus on Human Capital Management (HCM), with e-Shugyo, an all-inclusive Labor Management (Time & Attendance) application, as its flagship HCM product.

e-Shugyo has a LANSAs-based optimized Web browser interface that suits both on-premise and SaaS implementations. Since launching e-Shugyo's SaaS offering in 2006, volumes have steadily grown. With 35,000 employees from 130 companies using the SaaS deployment option, NDS's observation is that prospective customers now have a strong preference for the SaaS model.

Mr. Hirayama, NDS president, said, "LANSAs allows us to focus on the business functionality, rather than the underlying technology of application development. Our e-Shugyo SaaS offering has similar benefits for our customers, allowing them to focus on their business rather than IT infrastructure."



*Cloud solutions allow companies of all sizes to make use of options that are standard for a modern data center, but that can be hard to justify on-premise because of complexity and cost.*

## Finance and Insurance

**ACBS® a division of Fidelity Information Services** since 2003 and a LANSAs customer since 1991, is the global leader in high-end systems for originating, syndicating, servicing, trading and settling of corporate loans, especially large syndicated loans. With nearly 100 clients, including 8 of the top-15 world banks and 23 of the top-50 world banks (as ranked by Tier 1 Capital, in the July 2012 issue of "The Banker"), over 30 percent of syndicated loans worldwide are processed by ACBS Loan Systems.

The ACBS (Advanced Commercial Banking System) servicing application is primarily LANSAs-based and is deployed on Windows and IBM i platforms at customer sites, or as a SaaS solution. The SaaS option is used by around 20 organizations, mostly smaller financial institutions that prefer a regular service fee rather than the capital investment required to license and deploy ACBS on-premise.

Paul Little, VP Client & Technology Services - ACBS at Fidelity Information Systems, says "We're finding that most prospective clients want to focus on managing their business and are happy to let us manage the technology in a hosted environment."

**AllClear Insurance Services Limited**, based in Essex in the U.K., is a market leader with its AllClear Travel insurance, which provides medical travel insurance for people with pre-existing medical conditions who find difficulty in getting travel insurance elsewhere. The company used LANSAs to take its insurance product to the Web and to develop and host

branded travel insurance Web sites, as well as member benefit sites. AllClear is now hosting over 100 branded travel insurance sites.

Nikki Hunt, Head of IT at AllClear Insurance Services, explains that the original AllClear systems design made it easy to extend and re-badge for third parties. "There is hardly any programming involved in setting up a new branded site. We do most of the customization by adding data files and defining rules and rates. All in all, we can have a new customer up and running within two days.

"We also host sites for another company in our group, Oakwood Promotions Limited, which runs affinity-based benefit schemes and motivation reward programs for about twenty organizations. Using LANSAs Commerce Edition we can set up a new member-benefit site from scratch in about three days," says Hunt. "Without LANSAs's Web ability, we could not have grown to where we are today. We were the first to offer branded insurance and member-benefit sites. While others have followed, no one has had the same success."

**MDC**, established in 1987 and based in Dublin, Ireland, offers a wide array of IT services and specializes in interactive and transaction-based Web applications for the financial services industry. Insurers and brokers use MDC's LANSAs-based InsureIT and BrokerIT frameworks to build Web-enabled 'quote and buy' insurance products that integrate in real-time with any IBM i or Windows-based back-end Policy Administration System (PAS), if not used with InsureIT's own PAS. The solution also

includes real-time data exchange with multiple rating engines and insurers.

MDC's insurer and broker customers can use the solution on-premise, or as a service hosted in MDC's data center on IBM i servers. Customers include Allianz Ireland for most of its online consumer and B2B insurance products, TopQuote for its Car insurance, Glennon Insurance Brokers for its motor and household insurance, Brian J. Pierce for its Taxi Insurance, and numerous brokers for their travel insurance.

## Education

**MarkManager** is an on-screen marking solution developed by the Office of the Board of Studies (OBOS) New South Wales, Australia. It allows authorized markers to view and mark online a scanned image of students' written exam responses, and student responses entered or spoken online. It also provides real-time statistics, including marker reliability data, to monitor and manage the marking process. The solution has delivered significant benefits to the NSW education community during its progressive adoption for High School Certificate (HSC) marking since 2009, as it promotes equity, accuracy and consistency of marking.

MarkManager is built with LANSA's development tools and LANSA Integrator is used extensively to create and prepare a multitude of PDFs that are delivered to the markers for marking. LANSA Pty Ltd has worked with OBOS to commercialize the solution. MarkManager's architecture supports web-based access to a secure and scalable IBM

Power Systems server running IBM i. Customers can implement MarkManager on-premise, or on a SaaS basis supporting both multi-tenanted and fully virtualized implementations, hosted by OBOS in a secure Private Cloud environment.

Following its commercialization, MarkManager was successfully used on a SaaS basis in 2012 by the Western Australia School Curriculum and Standards Authority for online marking of selected WA Certificate of Education (WACE) examinations. A number of other SaaS engagements are in process.

Mitra Bhar, Manager IT at OBOS, says "It is important that we continue to investigate how advances in technology can provide improvements in our examination and assessment programs. LANSA's technology and the IBM i platform help us to provide accurate, highly reliable and secure solutions."

## Other SaaS Solutions

**PFW Systems Corporation**, an ADP company, headquartered in London, Ontario, Canada, is a leading provider of management software for equipment dealerships. PFW has been using LANSA since 1994, initially to enhance its classic COBOL/RPG-based Dealership Management solution and add Web extensions, and later to redevelop it completely. PFW's current dealer management offering, released in 2006 and called IntelliDealer, is totally developed with Visual LANSA and is 100% browser-based, allowing PFW to offer IntelliDealer as a service in addition to on-premise licensing.

Frank DeDecker, Director Product Management & Market Relations at PFW, says

"Giving customers both options gave us access to a wider market and has contributed to stellar growth. It allowed us to increase from 800 customer locations in 2006 to nearly 1500 locations today. Most of our new customers, probably over 95%, are choosing for SaaS. Many of our on-premise customers also plan to migrate to SaaS when the renegotiations for their hardware come up.

"The SaaS option is good for those dealers that want to get off the technology treadmill. Our data centers have duplicate servers, with redundancy and disaster recovery on separate sites and networks. It's hurricane proof, as testified by one of our customers based in New York state, the most severely hit region by super storm Sandy in 2012."

"PFW and LANSA worked together with IBM at the IBM Rochester Benchmark center to stress test IntelliDealer and mimic the SaaS workload. Having all the experts together allowed us to very efficiently fine tune performance and make adjustments where needed. The IBM i architecture was built for SaaS and with only minor configuration changes and adjustments to IntelliDealer's design, we were able to take full advantage of that architecture."

For its SaaS offering, PFW entered in 2006 into a strategic alliance with ADP (Automatic Data Processing, Inc.), one of the world's largest providers of business outsourcing with over \$10 billion in revenues and more than 600,000 clients. The alliance worked very well and in 2009 PFW became a wholly owned unit in the ADP Dealer Services division.

**Rippe & Kingston Systems, Inc.**, headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, is an international information technology solutions and services firm with clients in 43 states and 9 countries. Several of R&K's solutions are developed with LANSA and available on IBM i, Windows or SaaS.

R&K has several hundred law firms using its LANSA-based LMS (Legal financial and practice Management System). LMS has been a well established on-premise solution for nearly 30 years. More recently, with over 125 SaaS implementations, LMS topped the Cloud charts as well. R&K's enterprise contract management solution, Contract Guardian, also developed with LANSA, is used by nearly 60 healthcare organizations, of which the vast majority have opted for the SaaS implementation.

Last but not least, R&K provides a GDSN (Global Data Synchronization Network) solution that is based on LANSA's IWorldSync certified Data Sync Direct. More than



*A good SaaS solution provides hurricane proof protection on the server side, with disaster recovery on separate sites and networks. Customers only have to worry about the client side.*

150 customers have opted for the Cloud implementation, exceeding the number of R&K's on-premise customers of the solution.

Thomas Davidson, owner and Vice President at R&K, says, "We have been able to utilize LANSA's any device scenario, giving customers the choice of tablets, Smartphones and desktops to access their data. Our IBM i Cloud customers can take full advantage of the platform's scalability, which has given us a big competitive advantage, especially in the legal area. Our customers can grow from 10 to over 100 lawyers and don't have to worry about hardware upgrades. Adding customers isn't a hassle either."

"SaaS and Cloud have been really effective for us, using smart software and data base design, the right development tools and the right infrastructure. I estimate that in dollars 60% of our new business is SaaS or Cloud based, in number of accounts it is probably closer to 70%. We anticipated that it would be mostly the smaller businesses that would embrace the Cloud, but larger companies are getting tired of IT complexity as well and are equally likely to opt for the Cloud."

**ACCEO Solutions Inc.**, based in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, offers Scoopsoft, an integrated management system designed for organizations in the distribution, forestry, petroleum and mining sectors, as well as franchise chains, such as restaurants, at the head office level. Scoopsoft is used by over 50 customers (most with multiple sites), including a fast growing number of SaaS customers.

In the early nineties Scoopsoft started out as an RPG solution, which was then enhanced with LANSA for a Web-based CRM portal. Over the years many of the 5250 and RPG components have been redeveloped with Visual LANSA Framework, while the remaining components have been modernized with LANSA RAMP.

The modernized and redeveloped components reside in the same browser-based framework, which allowed ACCEO to tap into a wider market, by offering Scoopsoft as a service, in addition to on-premise IBM i implementations. According to Renel Morin, Account Manager at ACCEO, the SaaS solution is popular with companies of all sizes. The fact that Scoopsoft is hosted on IBM i servers is considered an additional benefit by customers, as it is a proven secure platform with consistent high availability.

**Evolution Systems** is an independent Australian owned Cloud Services Provider with a strong focus on providing solutions



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to organizations with an IBM Midrange infrastructure. At the core of its business is its wholly owned data center located in Sydney, from where the company offers a range of Cloud solutions on IBM Power i systems, Windows and Linux.

Evolution uses LANSA's aXes instant-Web-enablement tool for those customers that require secure browser access to their 5250 applications in the Cloud from any combination of desktops, tablets and smartphones. Geoff Boreland, founder and managing director of Evolution Systems explains "For example, one of our customers uses a 5250 emulator to access their System/21 ERP system, which has been tailored to suit their business over the years. They had a specific requirement to allow secure browser access to their ERP to a 3rd party. With aXes we were able to not only meet that requirement, but also to remove the ability of the 3rd party to perform any updates. We could do that without changing a single line of code in the ERP."

"We can pass on economies of scale by taking advantage of IBM i's advanced virtualization technology, PowerVM. aXes Web-enablement software facilitates the fast and simple provisioning of new customers and additional users. It suits our hosted services with on demand scaling, whether up or down."

**eC-LINK.com Pte Ltd** is a Singapore based software house specializing in ERP and supply chain management software for small and mid-sized enterprises. eC-LINK redeveloped its

original ERP solution, which was built in 1993 with LANSA for iSeries, with Visual LANSA. The new eC-LINK ERP solution is available in Chinese and English on Windows, IBM i and as a SaaS solution.

eC-Link is a popular solution in Singapore and Malaysia and counts over 40 onsite and SaaS customers, including Nippon Steel Chemical Company, Kishimoto Sangyo, Tipex, Socma Trading, Kavo Dental Equipment, Pely Auto Aircon Parts and Tee Yih Jia Food Manufacturing in Singapore and Malaysia.

Fred Leow, president of eC-LINK.com, said, "In a market where customized enterprise solutions often take over a year to implement, I am proud to see the majority of our customers 'go-live' within months. Being able to offer our solution as a service, takes another level of complexity away for our customers, not having to worry about hardware, backups, security, and so on."

## Conclusion

LANSA, especially when used on the IBM i platform, has made it easy for ISVs to add SaaS to their product mix by minimizing the effort and costs to get SaaS ready. ISVs that chose LANSA have overcome the technical and financial barriers of SaaS and are now enjoying accelerated growth and more predictable income streams. ■