Beware of hanger: Software wants to eat your infrastructure

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In 2011, Marc Andreessen wrote his now famous **"Why Software Is Eating the World"** essay in *The Wall Street Journal*. He opened by discussing how HP planned (at the time) to jettison its PC business to invest more heavily in software—and why it was a smart move. What drove this shift? To start, software reduced infrastructure maintenance costs.

"My own theory is that we are in the middle of a dramatic and broad technological and economic shift in which software companies are poised to take over large swathes of the economy," he wrote. Okay, Andreessen, you have our attention.

Beware hungry, hungry software

The initial influx of Software as a Service (SaaS) gave IT's busy hands a bit of a break. Businesses no longer needed to build, manage, maintain, and upgrade their own software manually or in-house. This opened up a vast trove of opportunities for startups, entrepreneurs, and large corporations to create disruptive, scalable products and services in just about any industry, even those that haven't historically fallen under the tech umbrella. Can you think of even one vertical that isn't completely overrun with technology?

Andreessen had a big vision and makes a strong case for how software and SaaS companies—like Amazon, Netflix, Google, and Skype—were "eating" their non-software competitors. The same potential extended to enterprise infrastructure, but change has been slow. Articles in CIO magazine may fantasize about what the world will look like when software eats infrastructure, but many offices are nowhere near this type of discussion.

Remember the horse in the mud in *Neverending Story?*

That's us, stuck in legacy land. But to remain competitive in today's market and to stay lean, agile, and ahead of the curve, organizations of all sizes are turning to other tech solutions delivered in the "as a Service" model, such as Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) and Device as a Service (DaaS).

Leave legacy land for good

The Great Software Migration is driven by the ever-present desire to cut costs while boosting efficiency—the calculus that governs the lives of all IT decision-makers. The reality is infrastructure can be a huge pain to maintain. Embracing SaaS and DaaS could usher in a world where infrastructure takes a backseat and allows software to drive the car.

Let's think about that for a moment. IT managers handle an infinite number of moving parts to ensure office infrastructure runs smoothly. **Managing office infrastructure** can feel like a Game of Thrones-esque feat, where chaos is always a hair's-breadth away. Many organizations just don't have enough IT resources to keep up

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with the steady parade of needs. This hurts in plenty of ways: It can be difficult to predict costs, which makes it difficult to make and stick to budgets; in turn, making it harder every time you hold that budget discussion—not to mention the security implications of aging technology and more mobile endpoints ... need I go on?

Smart SaaS and DaaS investments can alleviate some of this burden by taking care of the nitty-gritty management details, freeing up valuable IT time to focus on more strategic initiatives. Partnering with trusted, expert vendors helps organizations allocate resources more effectively and make smarter decisions. These solutions can significantly reduce infrastructure maintenance costs by having these experts analyze how to optimize your IT environment for efficiency. This frees up capital to put toward modernization investments, which is critical given the rapid pace of technological advancement. In short, SaaS and DaaS can enable flexibility and agility.

Put IT in the driver's seat

According to Gartner, the **SaaS market** has grown exponentially over the past few years, with cloud system infrastructure services projected to grow 36.8 percent in 2017 to reach $34.6 billion, and cloud application services expected to grow 20.1 percent to reach $46.3 billion.

"Organizations are pursuing strategies because of the multidimensional value of cloud services, including values such as agility, scalability, cost benefits, innovation, and business growth," said Sid Nag, research director at Gartner. An article published in **Computer Economics** found that organizations fully utilizing cloud computing save, on average, more than 15 percent in IT spending.

What does this look like in practice? **HP's DaaS** offering is a useful example: It boosts employee productivity and IT efficiency with world-class computing solutions that deliver hardware, accessories, lifecycle services, and support under one contract. Not only can it help keep devices in tip-top shape, but it also provides analytics and proactive management at the device level, allowing you to pinpoint when a device is underperforming. From there, you can proactively address issues, minimizing downtime.

DaaS solutions can make your company more efficient and improve the employee experience, just as other Software as a Service solutions can "eat" legacy hardware management techniques, like in-house infrastructure maintenance. Picture your IT department and think: How much time could this type of solution save your team? SaaS is after your legacy holdups, and your team is hungry for better, more efficient solutions. With software eating the world, it's time for all IT decision-makers to grab a spoon.

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