

# The Cloud of Damocles



Lori MacVittie, 2010-22-04

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“...with clouds, the business user can become king. Creating a private cloud will take considerable IT skill, but once one is built, authorized business users will be able to tap that computing power without a lot of know-how.

-- [Why 'Private Cloud' Computing Is Real – And Worth Considering, April 2010, InformationWeek](#)

Really? I've worked in a lot of places, including enterprises. Maybe your enterprise is different, maybe your business users



are savvier than ones with which I've worked, but I just don't see this happening on a regular basis. Business users aren't likely to be tapping into anything except the extra hours IT suddenly has on their hands because they've been freed from the tedious tasks of deploying and configuring servers. Business users define requirements, they perform user-acceptance testing, they set the service-level parameters for what's acceptable performance and availability for the applications they've commissioned (paid for) to be developed and/or deployed for business purposes.

But they don't push buttons and deploy applications, nor do they configure them, nor do they *want* to perform those tasks. If they did, they'd be in – wait for it, wait for it – IT.



But Lori, what about SaaS (Software as a Service)? That's cloud computing. Business users tap into that, don't they? No, no they don't. [They tap into the software](#) – that's

why it's called *Software as a Service* and not *Cloud Computing as a Service*. The SaaS model also requires, necessarily, that the business processes and functions of the software being offered are **highly commoditized** across a wide variety of industries or at a minimum can be easily configured to support varying workflow processes. CRM. SFA. E-mail. Document management. HR. Payroll. These types of applications are sufficiently consistent in data schemas, workflows, and terminology across industries to make them a viable SaaS solution. Other applications? Likely not simply because they require much more customization and integration; work that isn't going to be accomplished by business users – not at the implementation level, at least.

Packaging up an application into a virtual machine or deploying it as SaaS and making it available for self-service provisioning via an external or internal cloud does not eliminate the need for integration, upgrades, patches, configuration, and performance tuning. The cloud is not a magical land in which applications execute flawlessly or integrate themselves. That means someone - and it ain't gonna be a business user - is going to have to take care of that application.

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