



The desktop roadblock



The challenge of integrating software as a service (SaaS) applications with other enterprise applications using traditional approaches is a very real one. **FRANCIS CARDEN**, founder and chief evangelist of OpenSpan offers an alternative approach that uses the common denominator between all applications, cloud and desktop alike: their interaction with the operating system.

SOFTWARE AS a service (SaaS) is gaining in popularity. Some obvious benefits are cost savings, ease of administration, no need to do mass upgrades, and centralised support. But with SaaS come challenges that many organisations are just now grappling with. Information Week, in January this year, addressed integration in an interview with SAP's CEO, James McDermott. Their article says, in part: "A company that tries to avoid tough integration issues with SaaS

will be left trying to integrate hosted software from a variety of vendors using middleware from yet another vendor." It then adds McDermott's thought, "They're discovering 'maybe software as a service wasn't so cheap after all.'"

And a recent report from Gartner Research projects that cloud computing applications, or, in Gartner's terms, SEAPs – service-enabled application platforms – are still in an early phase of development. To paraphrase the

report, from now until 2013, SEAP technology will be "opportunistic and architecturally simple application development among Global 2000 enterprises." Meaning, SaaS won't replace most sets of desktop applications anytime soon, presenting the integration dilemma.

Lack of integration presents some very real challenges for organisations adopting SaaS applications. For example, a shift of 1,000 call centre agents signs on to the centre's new