

Landmark Subscriber Newsletter



February 2010

Dependent or Independent

That is the question. Whether we like it or not, the technological giants of the world are driving us into an era where mobile convergence of services and visual communication is the norm. The cell phone is a good example of this. Providing one has good eyesight or a set of spectacles at the ready, they are a gee-whiz tool. Apple's iPad, announced last week may overcome the need for spectacles. As we use these technologies more we become deeply dependent on them. When they let us down, all hell breaks loose. Look at the disruption when Telecom's XT network went down a week or two ago (the second time in recent months). Even the power outage north of the Waikato earlier last week shows how services we take for granted and totally rely on can let us down.



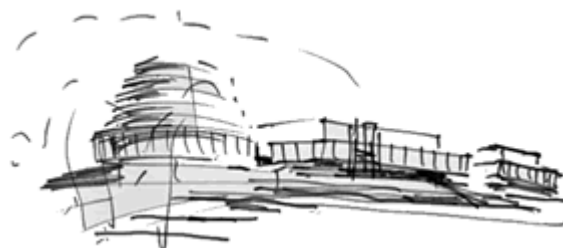
Software as a Service

Another service growing in popularity is the so called "Software as a Service" (SaaS) computer facility. This is where both the software, and your personal data, are centralised, on a computer, somewhere else in the world. With your authority, such programs can gain access to your bank and trading accounts and present that data for analysis by you or a "Trusted Agent" such as an Accountant. It is being hailed as the next generation software. Of course, to make use of such a facility one must have a fast and reliable internet connection. Now there's another question. Even with a fast connection, some experts are talking about the possibility of "Brown Outs" for up to a day as the global internet becomes overloaded, mainly through social networking.

As a company, i.Agri produces LandMark software which sits on your computer. Data can be processed by you on the spot and, if you wish, pushed around the globe electronically to a destination of your choosing in small, easy to transmit, files. You, the client, can access your bank and trading accounts using passwords and security verification and import that data into LandMark. You have control over all that's going on and it can be achieved even at dial-up speeds.

Government Broadband Proposals

Government proposals through their Ministry of Economic Development that indicate within ten years, 97% of New Zealand Households and Enterprises will have access to broadband speeds about 100 times faster than the old 56Kbps dial up service and approx 9 – 10 times faster than most satellite broadband services in this country.



The above proposal is distinct from the Government's intention to provide Ultra-fast broadband to 75% of New Zealand households in the next 10 years by installing a "fibre-to-the-premises" broadband service with downlink speeds, by the writer's reckoning, 2000 times as fast as the old dial up speeds. Of course we all know where 75% of the population lives.

So Why is i.Agri Looking at Software as a Service (SaaS)?

If you've read between the previous lines, you'll appreciate I've already mentioned some of the "Cons" associated with SaaS and a couple of "Pros" with regard to stand-a-lone programs.

So why are we at i.Agri, taking another look at providing LandMark in a SaaS environment? Yes I did say another look because we experimented with it ten years ago but the then internet, with most of our clients being served by copper wire, was far too slow to function effectively. The situation today is better but not by much. We do have nation wide broadband coverage by satellite, but even that may become a basket case in terms of speed and latency limitations before long.

Let's have a look at some of the advantages and disadvantages as we see them for i.Agri and Clients:

Email Addresses

Please let us know of your email address is by emailing hq@iagri.com, so you can receive our newsletters and updates electronically.

Advantages & Disadvantages

Let's have a look at some of the advantages and disadvantages as we see them for i.Agri and Clients:

From a Client perspective:

Advantages:

1. 24/7 access to the latest software – no need to worry about updates or service packs or Versions or Software maintenance. They're all taken care of by the vendor (i.Agri).
2. Data loss, storage problems and backing up would be the responsibility of the service provider.
3. Access to one's business information using any online computer from any place in the world.
4. An ability for users of Apple and Linux operating systems to operate the LandMark software.
5. Allow aging computers, as long as they can log into the network using broadband, to use the most up to date software and computing technology as all the processing is managed by a fast computer elsewhere.
6. No reconfiguring and re-installation problems. If one buys a new computer just hook into the internet and it's all go.

Disadvantages:

1. The need for a fast reliable internet connection. (If the internet is down or browned out) everything stops and the remedy is out of your control.
2. Having one's data off site may be a concern.
3. Although the risk is small because security is good, no one can guarantee the system can't be hacked or data mined.

From i.Agri's perspective:

Advantages:

1. It's easier to maintain and keep up to date software on one central server.
2. Easy to service national and international clients
3. Easier to provide 24/7 helpdesk assistance.
4. All clients are singing from the same hymn sheet.
5. Clients do have a choice and can still opt out of the system.

Disadvantages:

1. Large upfront cost and an ongoing overhead cost.



Response

It's hard to keep up, but do we need to? Do we really want to?

We at i.Agri have to make our own business decisions but we really would be interested in your opinion.

email us at hq@iagri.com to feed us your thoughts about desktop v SaaS.

i.Agri “Helpdesk” on Skype



Some of you will already be aware of “Skype” and what it does. Those who don’t know much about it should find out. You can do this by typing www.skype.com into your web browser (or clicking on the previous link) and downloading a free copy of the software. You will need a microphone and possibly a camera to get the best

use out of Skype. (A lot of new computers have these built in.) Naturally it’s best to have broadband. Once you have installed the software you can talk, and see if you wish, friends and family anywhere in the world at no cost. To use this facility would require those friends and family to be hooked into the internet at the same time as you but organizing that isn’t a big deal. The quality of the calls and video is surprisingly high.

i.Agri is on line for the entire working day so you could use Skype to contact us immediately and cheaply. If the help desk is busy at the time of your call, or if your call is after hours, it will be logged and the help desk will get back to you at the first opportunity. If you are uncertain about getting set up then make what could be your final call, on our 0800 617 788 line and we will help you set up. For those who manage to set themselves up with Skype, our Helpdesk contact address is **iagrilimited**.

Subscription adjustment

The full price for LandMark Farm is \$39.95 + GST per month and \$29.95 + GST per month for LandMark Money. Six years ago, when we restructured the business and moved to a subscription based business, business consultants at the time advised us that our prices for LandMark products were too low and warned us against offering concessions. In the interest of our clients, we went against that advice, went ahead with the low price and offered concessions as well. We haven’t regretted those decisions. Some of our clients have been receiving those concessions for 6 years and we believe we have rewarded them well for their loyalty. LandMark software is now significantly superior to what it was 6 years ago and the cost of development and the services we offer has increased enormously. If we are to continue to offer the highest quality of service and have a long term future, it is appropriate for us to advise those subscribers on concessional rates at the moment, and who choose to renew their contract, that the rate will have to be at the full price for the LandMark products. This adjustment is something we have resisted for a long time but it has become an inevitable fact of life.

The announcement has no impact on the many clients who have not received concessional rates. It should be noted that even at the full rate, LandMark products are priced well below that of any competitors.

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