

AkSaaS Incubation Centre brings ISVs to the cloud

The AkSaaS Incubation Centre (AIC) was established in 2008 as part of efforts by the Infocomm Development Authority to develop a cloud ecosystem in Singapore.

The Challenge

While hosted services and cloud computing are all the rage and rapidly gaining critical mass, getting into the thick of the action is no mean feat. The requisite software licences and infrastructure needed to power Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) can sometimes be prohibitive for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), as additional costs are involved in acquiring the technological and business knowhow to set up an online shop.

“Lots of resources are needed to run SaaS,” said Mr Chinn Lim, Chief Technology Officer, AkSaaS. “Starting from scratch tends to be costly, especially if there is a lot of development and experimenting going on.”

ORGANISATION

AkSaaS Incubation Centre

INDUSTRY

ICT

CHALLENGE

Many independent software vendors (ISVs) face obstacles in SaaS-enabling their products due to the high costs involved in experimentation and development as well as the lack of technological and business know-how.

SOLUTION

The AkSaaS Incubation Centre was set up to help both new and established ISVs to SaaS-enable their offerings and take advantage of the new cloud computing paradigm. It adopts an iterative interaction model to assist business users and ISVs in transforming ideas and existing solutions to SaaS.

SERVICES

- Assessment
- Business Design
- Architecture Design
- Development & Go-to-Market Execution

The Solution

To bridge that gap, AIC was set up to help both new and established independent software vendors (ISVs) companies and application developers SaaS-enable their offerings to take advantage of the new paradigm. “We bring together the expertise, the partners, the infrastructure, and even the funding to help them take the next step towards SaaS,” said Mr Lim.

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Services

Assessment: An AIC engagement begins with a free assessment to ensure that an ISV has viable ideas or solutions that meet a ready demand and can be propagated via SaaS.

Business Design: AIC then goes through a series of steps to help the ISV crystallise its business model including target markets, revenue models, costs, and sustainability issues. “Successful players find a specific vertical niche to dominate and focus on high volume,” Said Mr Lim.

Architecture Design: AIC also helps its customers work through technical issues like multi-tenanted architectures, virtualisation, high availability and

high performance infrastructure, as well as the ability to provide adequate service levels.

Development & Go-to-Market Execution: With the support of the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) as well as technology partners such as Microsoft, HP and SingTel, AIC provides ISVs with services such as SaaS test-bedding facilities at a lower cost. It also assists ISVs in sourcing for funds and helps them tap on the marketing reach of its partners.

Success Stories

To date, AkSaaS has worked with 25 ISVs and has built a range of SaaS solutions catering to various sectors such as wellness and employment agencies.

SaaS for the employment agencies

Business challenges confronting employment agencies include business control, productivity, turnover, and growth. To address these issues, ISV Ordixa Pte Ltd worked with AkSaaS to develop a cloud SaaS solution from scratch. The INTEGRA solution is an Employment Agency Sales Order Management System that helps standardise and enforce business processes for the agencies, including the administration of foreign domestic workers and sales. It also allows business owners to manage the agencies' operations anytime, anywhere, enabling better business control.

SaaS for the wellness industry

Refine Solutions Pte Ltd had an all-in-one management system for the wellness industry and wanted to convert it to a SaaS solution. "Considering that SaaS has an offering model that we were less familiar with, we decided to look for professional help. Through our search, AkSaaS was found and selected as our best option," said Mr Raymond Ooi, Director and Co-Founder, Refine Solutions. "We were guided step-by-step on the milestones to achieve and deliver, beginning right from implementation planning to go-to-market strategies. This has certainly enabled us to progress in a proper manner, without rushing through or missing out any important milestones," he added.

Fine-tuning BI for the cloud

Business Intelligence (BI) software provider Elixir Technology approached AkSaaS to fine-tune the commercialisation of their BI solution on SaaS. "As Elixir provides purely the BI piece, data would have to come from another application. Working with AkSaaS has completed our offering, providing us with direct access to transactional data generated by AkSaaS' various SaaS applications as well as the complete cloud platform including the e-commerce capabilities needed to support the SaaS payment model," said Mr Lau Shih Hor, Chief Executive Officer, Elixir Technology. In May 2010, Elixir introduced Elixir Ambience, a cloud version of its BI software.

About the National Grid

The National Grid is a national effort that draws together commercial cloud service providers to offer pay-per-use access to compute, storage and software facilities. The three consortia who have been appointed National Cloud Service Providers are Alatum led by Singapore Computer Systems Ltd (now part of SingTel), nGrid led by New Media Express Pte Ltd and PTC System (S) Pte Ltd.

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