

For many businesses the future is c/s and mobile, not web

(Original creator: chillebrink)

I was visiting one of our VAR customers in Lille, France this week to talk about modernizing their ERP packaged application. It's been around for over 20 years, and they've undergone several modernization projects. What struck me though was their thoughts about moving the application to the web, or making parts of the application web enabled—well actually, their decision to not do this. Their customer base is primarily made up of factories, and of course their ERP systems are mission-critical to their manufacturing process. What is also critical is that their ERP app works as productively as possible—and having it on the web doesn't allow that. I think everyone knows, even by today's standards, that only working on a browser can be frustratingly slow. Especially in a factory/manufacturing type environment, they don't have the time to wait around for a browser to load, process, refresh, etc. In fact, this customer does have a web app, so it's not entirely the case that they have abandoned this approach.

But only 10% of their customer base uses it and the other 90%, they predict, won't move away from c/s anytime soon. So that's where the investment in their product needs to be. So this customer's next step for modernizing their ERP app is to make certain pieces of functionality mobile-enabled and skip the web (at least for now). They are looking carefully at what types of functionality will make sense to be made available on mobile devices—who is going to use it and for what purpose? Where will they be and what will they need to access? And I suppose that goes with the whole "mobile first" philosophy, but it's interesting to see the need for this in an enterprise environment, where c/s is alive and kicking—and will continue to be. Will that be the case for most business applications?