Drivers of SaaS-Adoption – An Empirical Study of Different Application Types

The Authors

Dr. Alexander Benlian
Prof. Dr. Thomas Hess
Ludwig-Maximilians-University
Munich
Institute for Information Systems and
New Media
Ludwigstr. 28
80539 Munich
Germany
{benlian | thess}@bwl.lmu.de

Prof. Dr. Peter Buxmann
Technical University of Darmstadt
Chair of Information Systems
Hochschulstraße 1
64289 Darmstadt
Germany
buxmann@is.tu-darmstadt.de

Abstract

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) is said to become an important cornerstone of the Internet of Services. However, while some market research and IT provider firms fervently support this point of view, others already conjure up the failure of this on-demand sourcing option. Oftentimes based on weak empirical data and shaky reasoning, these inconsistent perspectives lack scientific rigor and neglect to present a more differentiated picture of SaaS-adoption. This study seeks to deepen the understanding of factors driving the adoption of Software-as-a-Service (SaaS). Grounded in transaction cost theory, the resource-based view, and the theory of planned behavior, we develop a research model to assess SaaS-adoption at the application level. Survey data of 297 firms in Germany with 374 valid response items across different industries were collected to test the theoretical model. Our analysis revealed that patterns on the decision on SaaS-adoption differ across application types. Social influence, attitude toward SaaS-adoption, adoption uncertainty, and strategic value turned out to be the strongest and most consistent drivers across all application types. Furthermore, we found that firm size does not matter in SaaS-adoption, since large enterprises and small- and medium-sized companies had similar adoption rates. Overall, this study provides relevant findings that IT vendors can use to better appeal to potential companies that consider adopting SaaS.