



# ESSENTIALS OF Management Information Systems

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## Chapter 4 IT Infrastructure: Hardware and Software

### Case 2: Salesforce.com: SFA on the iPhone and iPod Touch

Tags: Mobile digital platform; iPhone; Salesforce.com; sales force automation; device-based software development platforms; contemporary software application development; SaaS; PaaS; NetSuite

#### Summary

Salesforce.com develops a mobile sales force management application for the iPhone using Apple's iPhone software development platform (SDK). A striking, contemporary example of the emerging digital platform where most computing will take place by 2015. L= 4:27

URL: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwo2VbDA1Io>



#### Case

Salesforce.com is a leading provider of software-as-a-service applications delivered over the Internet. The SaaS model is a departure from traditional software bought and installed on machines locally. Salesforce.com has been very successful and has shaken up the software industry with its innovative business model. More information on Salesforce.com is available in Chapter 5 of the text.

Apple is another company known for creative, disruptive new technologies and business models. One of its most recent products, the iPhone, represents this kind of technology.

Apple opened up its iPhone platform to third-party developers shortly after releasing it. They provide what's known as the iPhone SDK (software development kit) to developers free of charge.

This iPhone is very different from other smartphones because of its third-party development environment. Third-party applications make the iPhone unique, and the iPhone is an example of an open development platform being beneficial to the parent company. Salesforce.com is just one of many companies hoping to take advantage of the iPhone platform to broaden the market for its applications.


This video is a demonstration of a Salesforce SFA application, just one of Salesforce's 63,000 platform applications. It allows users to manager contracts, accounts, and leads: "what they're selling and who they're selling it to." The sophistication of the iPhone SDK is evident throughout the video, as the demonstration displays the use of the touch screen and other advanced functionality.

Other unique features of the iPhone SDK described in the video are the capacity to store data on the iPhone itself, so that connectivity to the Internet isn't required to use the application; the ability to sort deals based on a variety of different metrics, including progress, dollar amount, and name; and the ability of the SDK to 'speak to the force.com API', or, in other words, to interface with applications via the Internet to provide real-time updates (such as incoming deals).

For Apple, Salesforce.com's partnership means that Salesforce.com account holders will be more likely to buy an iPhone to use their applications; for Salesforce, the iPhone represents a large, lucrative market to which they can market their applications. Salesforce itself uses an open development platform to generate new applications, and other companies are following suit.

### **Case Study Questions**

1. What are some examples of 'disruptive' products created by Apple? How disruptive of a product is the iPhone and why?
2. Describe some of the unique ways Salesforce's SFA application uses the iPhone's features, including at least one not mentioned above.
3. What other companies or Web sites that you know of have open development platforms?
4. What advantages does the SFA application have for salespeople? If you were a salesperson, how would you use it?
5. Who benefits more from the partnership between the two companies, Salesforce.com or Apple? Explain your answer.



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