

AgreeDo Meeting Software Shows Potential for Start-Up SaaS

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When we think of SaaS, we usually think of Salesforce applications and corporate software for enterprises such as Microsoft Office 365. However SaaS exists in all levels and can be leveraged by companies for virtually any software need.

SaaS can really shine for simple tasks such as collaboration software and e-mail. This is because of how easy it is to access SaaS through the click of a mouse and a browser. An example of a SaaS designed to make meetings easier and more productive is AgreeDo.

You can check out a video of the way AgreeDo works and some of its features [here](#). Some of its highlights include collaboration, setting agendas, tracking results of meetings, decisions, tasks and other issues associated with enterprise meetings. Multiple agendas can be added to the meetings and invitations work with Outlook. As you know, meetings can be virtual or face-to-face and AgreeDo works with both. More information about the SaaS is available on AgreeDo's [website](#).

AgreeDo is a start-up that was launched March of 2011, according to a [press release](#). Its main agenda was to allow companies to overcome wasteful meetings that cost millions of dollars per year in lost productivity.

“Research indicates that opportunity costs – the lost productivity or value-added contributions made by participants because of inefficient or ineffective meetings – can equal three to 10 times what an employee normally earns,” according to the press release.

I recently had an e-mail exchange with AgreeDo's CEO Hannes Heckner. He explained a bit about the application and his company's stance on the role SaaS can play in enterprise computing.

Heckner said that AgreeDo is run by a larger company called Siehec GmbH. Siehec uses SaaS CRM thus allowing AgreeDo to leverage its own business model. AgreeDo also runs its own servers so there is no fear of lock-in for the company or loss of control from the likes of cloud providers such as Amazon.

The SaaS is an open platform that is free for general use, but companies who want to run their own AgreeDo server can purchase a license, said Heckner. In the future, there will be a premium version that will have additional features for a monthly fee.

AgreeDo is different from other meeting software, such as WebEx or GoToMeeting, because it goes beyond sharing parallel screens or desktops with other users, he explained. With AgreeDo you can share agendas or topics; nail down decisions and assign tasks; prepare the next meeting's agendas; and follow up on assigned tasks while driving the execution process independently.

Enterprise users can even use WebEx in conjunction with AgreeDo, Heckner added. This will allow users to create a meeting link in AgreeDo while using AgreeDo minutes; and simultaneously allow

enterprise users to host it in WebEx as a remote meeting.

Heckner would like to see peer-to-peer networking or an open standard for providers to take advantage of in the cloud industry. As you may know, this would prevent many of the issues companies face when choosing a provider such as cloud lock-in. The open standard would allow companies to move information from one service to another, he explained.

It is also worth noting that his suggestion about the free movement of data through open cloud standards would benefit the hybrid cloud approach. Hybrid clouds have to deal with multiple clouds, particularly both public and private data centers. So the open standard would allow the data to be shared easier between the servers. OpenStack is moving in this direction, but it still needs ways to go before it is accepted by the industry as a whole and the APIs become compatible with various providers.

Heckner suggests to choose providers that will allow your company to back up your data in case of later migration to different providers. The loss of data is a great risk in choosing a good cloud provider and a fear many company executives face. He also suggests to choose providers that are based in countries that have a legal system that you are comfortable with and can rely on.

“ If not sure ask where the service is located and what legal administration is responsible,” he said.