



Vision & Thoughts

*Stream*

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## 1. Introduction

This paper provides an introduction to the vision and thoughts of Stream.

## 2. Vision & Goals

It is our dream to create true business agility at a competitive price for our customers.

To accommodate this we have built our services model around some of the major developments that will dominate the way applications are being delivered and used in the next 3-5 years.

**Open Source** - The open source model and the power of the accompanying communities has already changed the way software is created on the internet. We believe that many small and medium size businesses and eventually large enterprises will recognize the open source model as a mature and competitive alternative for commercial software solutions. With the upcoming of commercial open source models where software companies offer enterprise class support for open source software, one of the most important barriers for using open source software will disappear.

**Software-as-a-Service** - Many organizations recognize that managing IT systems and IT infrastructure is not part of their core-business. They have come to the conclusion that development and deployment of IT solutions is something for specialized companies. Due to economies of scale SaaS vendors can offer solutions at a much lower cost of ownership. This is especially the case for small and medium size companies, as well as non-core business applications within large enterprises.

**BPM in the cloud** - Business Process Management (BPM) has been an important trend for several years. BPM and workflow are no longer limited to processes within organizations, but can span the boundaries of multiple organizations. With the success of mature SaaS offerings like Salesforce.com and Google Apps, there is a growing need for integration at the business process level.

We are the initiator and main contributor to the NetXq project, an efficient open source solution for process design, -execution and management. As a result of several years of research and development we have been able to create a unique set of software tools that can shorten the development/deployment life-cycle of process-oriented applications dramatically.

## 2.1 Open Source

Currently, most enterprise class software is composed of complex, integrated and bundled software applications. These applications cannot easily answer to the ever changing corporate processes. SAP for instance tells its clients that it is better to adapt their business processes to the SAP's ERP solution. They claim that their solutions are built on best-practice processes for all types of industries. Change however, is inevitable and your software should answer to the demands of the corporate processes, not the other way around. Ask yourself the question how well companies like SAP and Oracle can react to the revolution in community based marketing or -recruitment that is facilitated by the social web.

The best way to add value is by doing what you do best and collaborate with others who are better at what they do best. In our vision this can be achieved by using the best-of-breed in services and applications. This open-services model is the foundation of many state-of-the-art open source development projects.

We strongly believe in an Open Source community because:

- it makes you independent from software suppliers: you are no longer tied to a single software supplier who owns the intellectual rights to the source code.
- it ensures openness and security: you can check for yourself (or get someone else to) that the software does do what it promises to. Since the source code can be freely inspected, you are not dependent on the opinion of a single supplier about the quality of the software.
- it offers instant re-use of knowledge and software components. Closed source software has a tendency to keep on re-inventing the wheel. Open Source software grows organically; bad ideas die out, good ideas grow and are re-used in other projects.
- open standards are included. The concepts in an Open Source project are provided by developers and users from organizations all over the world. This enormous body of support means that many of these concepts become internationally accepted open standards. This provides interoperability.
- open source development improves quality. The evaluation of the quality of software is carried out by all those involved in an open source project. This can be hundreds or even thousands of users and developers. In traditional closed source development, it is done by the suppliers themselves. The supplier then determines whether a particular functionality is needed and whether the quality of the software is sufficient for a delivery or an update.
- open source software can easily be adjusted to specific user requirements. The fact that the code is open means that it is always possible to modify the software to suit existing systems, tools, platforms, databases, etc.

We strongly believe in the opportunities that open source software and the open source community offer to deliver better solutions in a smaller amount of time. It is for that reason that we are dedicated to contribute to the open source community. Stream is the initiator and most important contributor to the NetXq open source project, a very efficient solution for process design, -execution and management. Next to the NetXq project we contribute to several other open source projects and encourage our employees to participate in open source initiatives. Although we are not bound by using the software like commercial software companies do, we are convinced of the strengths of NetXq that is constantly being improved and extended.

## **2.2 Professional Open Source Software (POSS)**

Today open source software development is more than merely the domain of volunteers; various companies (like RedHat, Novell) provide support for open source software with the same guarantees as closed source suppliers provide. POSS companies exist as an exchange system between two sets of consumers: an open source community (motivated by mutual contribution) and a mainstream market (motivated by economic rewards). Organizations in need of support, services, training etc contribute financially for those services as paying customers. That money is used by the POSS company to pay for full-time resources (engineers, product managers etc.) whose efforts (the majority, if not all of it) end up as open source software, freely available to an open source community. The open source community contributes to the software by helping improve the design, functionality, quality, translations, and documentation of the software. The improved software attracts more customers and the cycle continues, hopefully perpetually.

Stream is such a professional open source software company and can be seen as one of the trendsetters for open source support in the Netherlands. Next to our support services we use the same open source software for our standardized Software-as-a-Service solutions.

## **2.3 Software as a Service**

Designing and developing a specific solution can be hard. But sometimes it can even be harder to deploy an already completed application on a company's IT-infrastructure. Due to high availability and security standards of corporate data centers, deployment of even the most simple applications that holds no critical data can bring an extravagant cost for hardware, installation and maintenance. It often can take many weeks or even months before you have gone through all procedures and there is capacity allocated to perform testing and installation. Virtualization can reduce some of the cost, but many IT organizations are only beginning to experiment with these technologies.

We prefer to deliver our solutions in a SaaS model. All our applications are 100% web-based and can be used from anywhere in the world. Due to the software solutions we use (NetXq combined with other open source components) we can create standardized solutions in a matter of weeks (see our list of applications). A standardized deployment model ensures "one-click" deployment on our test and production servers even for custom built applications. Security, monitoring and high-availability come standard with the platform. With this model we can deliver the comfort of a state-of-the-art platform and services at a very competitive price and a convenient payment schedule.

## 2.4 BPM in the cloud

As the developments in outsourcing and networked organizations progress, there is a growing need for collaboration and integration at the business processes level. Collaboration is no longer based on a set of mutual guidelines for data-exchange, but organizations are working together in complex chains according to mutually agreed business processes. SaaS applications like Salesforce and Google apps facilitate the collaboration between multiple organizations worldwide, but there is no means to tie these applications together in a controllable business process. Traditional BPM suites lack the flexibility and the interoperability to create such a process in the cloud. We have created NetXq as a multi-purpose process engine that is able to design and execute such processes and can act in various scenarios.