

Adobe Creative Suite Abandons Your Desktop for The Cloud

By Christopher Barnett

On May 6, 2013, Adobe [announced](#) that Creative Suite 6 and the component products included in that product line (e.g., Photoshop CS6, Illustrator CS6, etc.) would be the last Creative Suite products to be released under stand-alone, end-user licenses. Citing strong user enthusiasm for its new Creative Cloud hosted offering, Adobe stated:

...that the company will focus creative software development efforts on its Creative Cloud offering moving forward. While Adobe Creative Suite® 6 products will continue to be supported and available for purchase, the company has no plans for future releases of Creative Suite or other CS products.

Thus, one of the most successful and widely used lines of productivity software is abandoning the “traditional” model of licensing – some might say it is abandoning “licensing” altogether – and taking up residence in the cloud.

Such a move necessarily entails significant capital expenditures for the solution provider, in the form of a hosting infrastructure and support personnel sufficient to support demand for the service. However, there also are clear advantages for the provider, which may prove to outweigh those and other costs, such as a recurring revenue stream and a de-emphasis on audits and other license-compliance initiatives.

The benefits for consumers are less clear at this stage. As with all cloud-based solutions, Creative Cloud users will need to ensure first and foremost that the files created using the service will be accessible in the event their subscription terminates or the service goes down. (Adobe has [assured](#) worried users that it is planning to address this.) The cost of the service also may prove to be higher for many businesses – especially larger enterprises – that historically have preferred not to upgrade to the newest Creative Suite releases on a frequent basis. Service outages and data security also are significant concerns, especially for companies that might be using Creative Cloud solutions to create or manipulate confidential or proprietary information.

A bigger question is whether Adobe’s move to the cloud foreshadows a larger industry trend away from locally installed and locally licensed software solutions. I personally do not foresee a mass exodus in the near future, especially for server-based products like databases and information-management solutions. While it may be technologically possible to move that type of infrastructure to the cloud, many businesses simply do not trust third parties with their most critical IT systems. Not yet, anyway.

Depending on whether and how well Adobe succeeds with Creative Cloud, though, it is reasonable to predict that coming years may see most home and business workstations effectively turned into thin clients – computing devices running only firmware, web and file browsers, and minimal local software to interface with remote application servers. Whether businesses’ core infrastructure servers ever make the same leap into the cloud remains to be seen, but it is undeniable that this first step by Adobe is a significant one.



About the author Christopher Barnett:

Christopher represents clients in a variety of business, intellectual property and IT-related contexts, with matters involving trademark registration and enforcement, software and licensing disputes and litigation, and mergers, divestments and service transactions. Christopher’s practice includes substantial attention to concerns faced by media & technology companies and to disputes involving new media, especially the fast-evolving content on the Internet.

Get in touch: cbarnett@scottandscottllp.com | 800.596.6176

