

10 IT management technology start-ups to watch

Cloud computing, SaaS, virtualization, open source software are among focus areas for IT management newcomers

By [Denise Dubie](#), Network World

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Why it's worth watching: The company's success hinges on widespread adoption of cloud-based services and SaaS applications, both of which gained attention from industry watchers and customers in 2009. If enterprise IT managers invested in such services, then industry watchers argue they will need a mechanism to control access to the environment – which would be different from existing access management offerings.

"Conformity offers an interesting concept because if all IT managers do jump on the cloud, then they are going to have to figure out the best way to integrate and manage access to these services, while ensuring that everyone's identity is consistent. The company is talking about providing identity management, a sort of single sign on, across all these different cloud or SaaS-provided services," says Noel.

How company got its start: Founders Scott Bils and Roy Kipp recognized the need to centrally manage multiple SaaS applications and user access to those applications as the trend toward hosted applications grew.

How company got its name: Based on premise that for SaaS and cloud applications to gain acceptance in the enterprise that usage and management of these applications would have to "conform" to existing IT policies and controls.

CEO: Tom Smith, formerly CEO at Countermind, a Colorado-based mobile software developer. He also held senior executive and sales positions at @hand Corp., Rational Software, HP and Dazel.

Funding: \$3 million Series A funding from Guggenheim Venture Partners, January 2009

Who's using the product: Conformity names Initiate Systems and Genband as current customers with multi-SaaS environments.

Company: [DeskCenter Solutions AG](#) and [DeskCenter USA](#)

Founded: April 2007 and October 2009

Headquarters: Leipzig, Germany and Long Beach, NY

Focus: DeskCenter Management Suite combines 15 applications to enable administration of physical and virtual desktops, servers and applications across a network. The platform delivers one database, one installation and a user interface that includes: asset, license, user, remote, service and power management; operating system, application and patch deployment; and helpdesk and service scheduling.

Why it's worth watching: Using various pricing models, including a SaaS option, DeskCenter signed 600 customers in its first year of delivering product. The company estimates some 180,000 desktops at both SMB and enterprise clients are managed with DeskCenter Management suite. Priced at less than \$3,000 for 25 devices, the vendor offers several needed features for companies of all sizes trying to control their client environment at an accessible price point.

"Desktop operations teams are now responsible for the security and disaster recovery of the devices, both physical and virtual, that they manage. This means that IT organizations need client management solutions that not only help them manage and secure today's more standardized PC environment, but will also be able to support the desktop of tomorrow – one that is virtual and more heterogeneous than ever before," reads a [Forrester Research report](#) on client management systems. "The cost of managing devices is on the rise, while visibility into these devices is on the decline."