Talking SMAC: Social, Mobile, Analytics & Cloud

Unless you’ve been lost on a desert island for the past few years you have most likely heard of Social, Mobile, Analytics and Cloud. Collectively referred to as SMAC, these forces individually have the potential to change businesses but taken together, SMAC represents an unprecedented wave of disruption that has is creating whole new business models not previously imagined.
What are these SMAC forces you speak of?
First it is helpful to understand each of the SMAC services individually.

*Social*

Social media allows people to connect and interact while leaving a trail of data on preferences and relationships with other people. Everytime you “like” something you are generating data that someone, somewhere might be interested in knowing. The interaction benefits the user by allowing them to have access to feedback and commentary from other participants in the social network. This data trail benefits the consumer of the data and can be harnessed to provide insight into products, trends and sentiments of participants in the social network to identify information with high social value.

*Mobile*

The Mobile Web is bringing users closer and closer to businesses and giving businesses the opportunity to interact with their customers in much more engaging ways. The Mobile Web is made possible by wireless data networks, smartphones and tablets, but truly excels when businesses take advantage of the user’s context (who, what when, where and how) to delivery robust, context-aware business services. High context interactions lead to higher customer engagement and satisfaction in using the service.

*Analytics*

Emerging technologies such as Big Data, Data Science, and advanced visualization are allowing companies to ingest, process, and visualize information beyond the capabilities of conventional Business Intelligence and Data Warehouse environments. These forces are behind a new level of analytics which in turn create business value and innovation through improved decision making.

*Cloud*

Cloud computing provides business value as an enabler of efficient, elastic computing capacity. Cloud computing allows organizations to pay only for the services and computing power that they need while efficiently scaling up and down in response to varying demand. Cloud computing has given rise to several “Something-as-a-Service” or “XaaS” variations such as Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Platform as a service (PaaS), Software as a Service (SaaS) and even Mobile Backend as a Service (MBaaS). Each of these cloud-based service models provide varying degrees of technical and business capabilities and serve as enablers to other solutions.

A Disruptive Force by Any Other Name Would Still Drive Change

It's not often that I paraphrase Shakespeare (fans of his work are probably glad that is the case) but SMAC gets a lot of industry press and major industry analysts each have their own branding and point of view on SMAC. Gartner calls it the “Nexus of Forces”. Forrester refers to “The Mobile Mindshift”. IDC uses “Third Platform”. Whatever
name the analysts are using, each of the analysts above agree at some level that Social, Mobile, Analytics & Cloud each contribute individually to the rate of business and technology change but taken together they drive exponential change.

**Sum of the Whole Greater Than The Parts**

SMAC forces form a truly symbiotic relationship. They both encourage each other and benefit from each other’s increased usage.

We recommend a systematic approach to building out your SMAC capability to create business value. This approach includes:

- Define business objectives, assess your current state and identify a realistic set of initiatives to start.
- Define manageable discovery projects to build up capabilities with each of the SMAC forces and explore their benefits to your business.
- Pursue an architecture-focused approach that leverages modern best practices to both isolate and integrate SMAC technologies.
- Leverage technology partners to manage risk of the rapidly evolving SMAC technology environment.

**How Do I Move Forward with SMAC**

Taking on SMAC may provide huge business value but can also be an overwhelming challenge. Many organizations have initiatives underway exploring one or more of the SMAC forces, however, these efforts may be siloed and perhaps less aligned than they could be. Given the rapid technology changes supporting SMAC and the overall complexity involved, implementing a fully integrated SMAC solution can be challenging and demonstrating initial business value early returns on that investment can be difficult.
As Director of Technology Services at Collaborative, Zach is responsible for leading multiple strategic client projects ranging from Enterprise Architecture to onshore, remote development. Zach works with clients to develop technology strategies to meet changing business needs and to leverage technology to solve business challenges.

Zach also leads Collaborative’s Software Solutions practice where he is responsible for developing service offerings that leverage Collaborative’s strengths to meet our client’s needs. Zach leads a team responsible for technology innovation and providing thought leadership across existing and emerging technologies. In this capacity he stays on top of industry trends and cutting edge technologies with the goal of bringing innovative and pragmatic solutions to Collaborative clients.

Collaborative Consulting is a leading information technology services firm dedicated to helping our clients achieve business advantage through the use of strategy and technology. We deliver a comprehensive set of solutions across multiple industries, with a focus on business process and program management, information management, software solutions, and software performance and quality. We also have a set of offerings specific to the life sciences and financial services industries. Our unique model offers both onsite management and IT consulting as well as U.S.-based remote solution delivery.

To learn more about Collaborative, please visit our website at www.collaborative.com, email us at sales@collaborative.com, or contact us at 877-376-9900.