

It was 1991. As a business owner I was eager to find creative ways to market my company and battle the onslaught of competitors in my community. We all seemed to use the same marketing channels to reach the same customer base and had the same results...nominal growth at best. In my desperation to separate myself from my competition I reached out to a Marketing firm to get a pulse on what was on the horizon. Anything bigger, better, faster? I still remember that day as if it were yesterday as the consultant tried to explain to me this new technology called the World Wide Web. People will eventually access, he elaborated, this “Web” and create their own marketing and communication pages. And, to top it off, it is not going to cost them a thing! Not being a technology visionary, I did what I believe most commonsensical individuals would do upon hearing such ludicrous insight...laughed a bit (to myself of course), scratched my head in wonder and skepticism, and completely discounted it.

“...both desktop and web applications will continue to coexist for a long time so you need to make the decision based on your business needs.”

Since that memorable day, the growth of the World Wide Web has been nothing less than phenomenal; now boasting of over 3.4 billion users. As browsers and development platforms evolved, more businesses established their presence in the online world. These businesses leveraged the emerging interactive capabilities of the web to introduce applications that were served directly to a web browser. They could now access their business applications anywhere there was an internet connection!

However, is the Web right for your line-of-business software? While both Desktop and Web applications have their pros and cons they ultimately exist to help you solve your business problems. Which one is right for you? Let’s review the pros and cons of both.



VS



## Web Applications

### Cons

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- Can lose access to critical data
- Performance is based on internet connectivity
- Slower data entry, reporting, etc...
- More expensive over time

### Pros

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- Can be accessed anywhere
- No installation required

More interactive, media-rich user interfaces  
Vendor manages data back-ups

## Desktop Applications

### Cons

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Not easily accessible everywhere, but can be accessed through remote desktop  
Must be installed  
You must manage back-ups  
Hardware requirements must be met for optimal performance  
Interface complexity typically limited

### Pros

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Never lose control of your data  
No internet required  
Faster data entry, reporting, etc...  
Can be customized to meet your business needs  
Less expensive over time

## Which is right for my business?

As you can see each type of application has its own benefits and weaknesses and can be utilized best within its own niche. Though there are trends of convergence between the two with languages such as Java, I believe that both desktop and web applications will continue to coexist for a long time so you need to make the decision based on your business needs. If your business requires uninterrupted application access, fast data entry/reporting and a high level of customization then a desktop application would probably be a better fit. Now, with remote desktop technologies business owners can access their desktop business application from wherever there is an internet connection.

On the other hand, if your business does not rely on real-time continuity and speed, wants to leverage feature-rich interfaces, needs to access data from anywhere, and does not mind data being managed outside your organization, then web applications might be the answer for your business.

While my passion for technology has grown since that day in 1991 (and with it a much more progressive and optimistic view of the future of technology), I am still a business owner that has to consistently ask myself what type of application will ultimately help me solve my business problems and needs right now. I hope this article was helpful to you in your search for business applications.

*Alpine Technology Corporation has been serving the Waste and Recycling Industry for over 38 years with industry-leading software. Their flagship software, Visual RAMS-Pro, is currently used all over the globe with haulers, municipalities and large corporations helping their business operate more efficiently and profitably. Alpine's in-cab solution, Visual On-Route, is transforming the industry with its seamless integration with VRP and your office, its extensive tracking and reporting capabilities, and its user-friendly driver interface.*