Main Point: Short presentations organized by Tim Macer, Managing Director, Meaning Ltd. (London, UK), highlighted rising technologies with significant MR potential:
1) Delivering software via the Web via SaaS applications—reducing costs, boosting efficiency and encouraging global collaboration
2) Text and video image analysis tools helping MR to mine insights from copious unstructured data.
3) Mobile phones as survey delivery mechanisms to combat declining participation and boost engagement.

RCR impressions of content: Freshness: B
Relevance: A
Practicality: A-

MarketSight (Cambridge, MA) CEO Michael DeNitto analyzed the advantages of an SaaS model (hosted applications) over traditional desktop solutions, qualifying that “the impact of platform choice in MR is magnified through the heavy use of data and complex analysis by often globally distributed teams.”

Unlike traditional computer-installed software, SaaS users access software that is hosted on the provider’s website. SaaS tools tend to cost less overall, DeNitto explained, because firms “purchase only as many subscriptions (usually annually) as they need, when they need them,” he said.

“MR vendors can build robust tools without limiting their potential market to clients who have the internal computing resources to run them,” DeNitto offered.

“SaaS tool flexibility allows vendors to service a wider range of clients with one product. With one core version, training and support are less costly.”

Given the collaborative nature of MR, “SaaS offers an advantage by letting users gather and store data online in the same application as analysis tools, eliminating the time wasted emailing files, charts, etc. This better connects distant team members, and reduces duplication and time spent on project management,” shared DeNitto.

As self-contained solutions, he explained, SaaS tools are “easily integrated into existing systems, which is good for research agencies and MR departments that lack large IT functions. Providers handle technical problems and updates, strongly limiting unplanned downtime and ensuring the most up-to-date version of the tools.”

MR firms can also use SaaS permissioning to “allow clients who want to do some analysis themselves, while restricting access to data that might cause others to reach inappropriate conclusions,” he noted.

“SaaS can help researchers deliver better insights by automating routine processes, running complex statistical calculations and creating reports based on templates, etc.,” DeNitto summed. “So, they reduce time and energy, and yield more accurate results that are easily shared.”

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RCR Ratings Explanation: “Freshness” - Based on whether this content has previously been covered by any RFL newsletters; “Relevance” - The current importance of this content to the research industry; “Practicality” - The ease of implementation of suggestions expressed in this presentation.