

## Glossary of HR technology terms

<p>Cloud computing</p>	<p>In the simplest of terms, this means using servers/software that is owned by a vendor or vendors through the internet (renting space/software etc, rather than owning it and managing it).</p> <p>In true technical terms it is more complicated as it is also about “virtual servers and web-farms”.</p>
<p>Customise to fit</p>	<p>Developers get involved in writing “code” to get the software to do what you need it to do. This typically heavily involves you specifying your exact needs and testing.</p> <p>It also often means that the vendor will isolate your “copy” of the software code from their core product so that they are able to customise it to work for you without it affecting their core product.</p> <p>Be careful with this approach as this may mean that any future upgrade of the core code may not be applied to your version and therefore your version may become dated and expensive to upgrade later.</p>
<p>Configurable</p>	<p>This term usually means no software development work is required and features are “enabled” or turned on for you to use, which can either be done by your own administrator or perhaps your implementation partner/vendor support. Generally this means the features are tested and reliable.</p> <p>Usually this also means that the configurable options that you are using are within “core code” so that if the core code is upgraded, your options will continue to work (or at least if they don’t work, it is the responsibility of the vendor to correct at no cost).</p> <p>This type of approach is now becoming common within the software applications industry.</p>
<p>ERP application</p>	<p>This is an acronym typically given to applications such as SAP, Oracle or PeopleSoft where they suggest that their solution is able to be utilised for all business processes across an organisation (Enterprise Resource Planning).</p>
<p>Integrated solution</p>	<p>This can mean many things. An IT person asking the question if a certain software application can “integrate” with other software - e.g. payroll integration with a performance management system, generally means they want data automatically synchronised between the two systems.</p> <p>This needs careful consideration as there are times for HR processes when complete integration of all data fields is risky - e.g. if you are conducting a remuneration review as at a fixed date, then you may not</p>

	<p>want remuneration information to be updated after this date - what you may want, is for a person that has a remuneration change after your fixed date, to be excluded from the remuneration review process.</p> <p>An ideal solution to ensure all applications work effectively for the processes they are being used for is for each data field used in each application to be critiqued to agree if synchronisation is mandatory. This works in the same way as if you agree on the protocols of your laptop and phone synchronisation - the application you are purchasing to be able to be configured to update from the “source of truth” for each data field.</p>
Role-based security	<p>Users of the system are only able to view data they are authorised to view/edit/amend based on the role they have in the process of that data.</p>
“Single sign-on”	<p>The aim of a number of technology departments is for a user within their business to only need to sign-in once to be able to use any applications they are entitled to use.</p> <p>IT specialists generally favour this type of approach to make it easier for users so they don’t have to remember lots of passwords etc for different systems. It does carry risks when applying this principle to people information - if people in your business are good at logging out when leaving their desks, then this risk is minimal, but if a person leaves their desk for a period (which is less than the period in which your computer locks itself), anyone could access confidential information normally reserved only to the logged in user.</p> <p>A number of organisations are preferring a “half-way” approach when it comes to accessing people related information, in that the actual username and password still have to be entered in when accessing confidential applications, but it is the same username and password to that which they use to sign in to their computer generally.</p>
“Software as a service” (SaaS)	<p>This term means that no software or application is physically loaded on your computer. You log in to the application via a web browser and pay a licence fee to use/rent the software for a set period. Typically a cost of this nature can be treated as an operating expense rather than a capital purchase. Generally, also, upgrades come at no additional cost and occur automatically.</p> <p>Usually, providers of software of this nature will continue to invest in the product because if they don’t continue to do so, a client can cancel within a relatively short notice period due to the rental agreement so it is in their best interests to keep the product current.</p>
User interface	<p>What a person (user) will see on a screen (interface)</p>
Web-based	<p>This means something you can access via Internet explorer (or similar application like Mozilla or Firefox) and multiple people can access the same data at the same time.</p>
“Windows” environment	<p>Microsoft Windows is the standard operating system that is used to run applications such as Word, Excel Internet explorer, etc</p>