OVERVIEW

For years, organizations reserved the term “enterprise grade” for those hardware and software offerings that delivered the highest levels of service. “Consumer grade,” in contrast, defined a “lesser” quality of technology – good enough to use at home but not up to par for the business world.

In the last few years, online services have come to dominate many areas of personal life. People stay in touch with Facebook, use Internet-connected wearables for fitness, rely on mobile video apps to see friends at a distance, and share planning docs and scheduling tools to organize personal events. Dependent on a fickle consumer base, the makers of these apps have had to deliver an “always delightful” experience or risk losing those precious users.

As a company focused on enabling organizations to deliver apps that are never down, always fast, and can scale anywhere, ScaleArc wanted to understand whether these personal applications have affected people’s perceptions about application quality. ScaleArc surveyed nearly 600 IT decision makers – many of them involved in building consumer or enterprise applications – to understand how they ranked the reliability and performance of a variety of applications.

The survey results show that consumer apps broadly outperform enterprise apps and that IT decision makers often turn to consumer apps as an alternative to poorly performing applications. The survey also reveals the reasons that consumer software is seen as being more reliable than enterprise software, which consumer software IT workers turn to when enterprise software fails them, and which sites and services they rely on most frequently.

Two consumer apps – not enterprise apps – top the list of applications that IT decision makers expect to perform reliably. These responses map closely to the data about which sites and services survey respondents visit most often (see Page 6). The link between the popularity of these sites and the expectation that they will perform reliably illustrates how consumer apps have raised the bar on user expectations.

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More than three-quarters of IT decision makers (78%) agree that consumer grade is the new standard for apps today. While respondents cited better interfaces as the primary reason (54%), they also found less downtime (33%) and less likely to be sluggish (32%) as other reasons consumer applications offer a better experience.

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“We’ve seen the shift in expectations in our customer base. People are mobile all the time and always connected, so whether it’s a work app or a personal app, no one has the patience for it to be slow or – worse yet – offline. That experience has raised the bar for the service level we have to deliver with our enterprise SaaS offering.”

-- Michael Atkins, IT operations for DealerSocket
Key Findings

1. Performance is One of the Biggest Drivers Making Consumer Apps More Reliable than Enterprise Apps

Consumer software is more reliable than enterprise software, say 81% of respondents, with high performance being the most cited reason. Among IT professionals, 26% say consumer apps have zero downtime, 26% say they have fewer crashes, and 33% say consumer apps have faster performance.

2. IT Professionals Turn to Consumer Software if Enterprise Software Doesn’t Work

The vast majority of IT professionals said they are forced to switch to consumer software products when enterprise software doesn’t work. The #1 consumer software product they turn to is Skype (37%), followed by Dropbox (34%), Google Docs (34%), and Google Drive (34%).
Nearly 40% of the IT decision makers who responded to ScaleArc’s survey work for companies that deliver apps or services for other companies. Even this group, responsible for SLAs higher than 99%, overwhelmingly said they find consumer apps to be more reliable than enterprise apps.

ScaleArc’s research revealed consensus among IT decision makers that performance requirements are higher for consumer apps than for enterprise apps. More than half of all respondents (52%) cited greater visibility on the consumer apps side than for enterprise apps.

Other top reasons behind the higher performance requirements included: companies developing consumer apps attract more talented people to design them (31%); consumer apps have more engineers supporting them (26%); and more consumer apps must make money (28%). And nearly 1 in 4 IT professionals (23%) said that consumer apps are the cool kids; enterprise apps are for the geeks.
Nearly All IT Decision Makers Would Be Impacted by Site Slowness or Downtime

Roughly 95% of respondents said they would be negatively impacted if a website were slow or had downtime, with the #1 website impacting them being Google (79%). Facebook (25%), GoToMeeting (19%), LinkedIn (18%), and Salesforce (12%) were next on the list of sites and services whose slow performance or downtime would impact them.

You would feel most impacted if which of the following sites or services were slow or down?

- Tinder
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Google
- Uber
- Waze
- Slack
- Asana
- Evernote
- GoToMeeting
- LinkedIn
- Salesforce
- None
- Other

Respondents would be more impacted by consumer apps being slower or offline than enterprise apps.

Which of the following sites or services seem to be slow or down most often?

- Tinder
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Google
- Uber
- Waze
- Slack
- Asana
- Evernote
- GoToMeeting
- LinkedIn
- Salesforce
- None
- Other

After Facebook, two enterprise apps—GoToMeeting and LinkedIn—are perceived to have the most performance problems.
ScaleArc is passionate about helping organizations deliver consumer-grade applications. The ScaleArc software lets businesses unlock the power of modern databases – the heart and soul of any application – without writing a single line of code. For more information, visit http://www.ScaleArc.com.

ABOUT OUR RESPONDENTS

ScaleArc surveyed more than 600 respondents, of whom 528 were IT decision makers. Of these IT decision makers:

• 32% worked for a company that primarily delivers apps or services for consumers

• 39% worked for a company that primarily delivers apps or services for other businesses

• 29% worked for a company that delivers apps or services to neither of those

ScaleArc enables consumer-grade apps for today’s digital business – apps that are never down, are always fast, and scale anywhere. ScaleArc’s database load balancing software helps organizations of all sizes eliminate application downtime from database outages or maintenance, improve application performance, and scale database capacity – all without writing a single line of code. As a result, ScaleArc customers increase revenue, reduce operational costs, and accelerate time to market. Learn more about ScaleArc and its customers and partners at www.ScaleArc.com.

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