

# New Media and the Case for Ch-ch-ch-changes

By Sonya

Last week, in a conversation with [InfoStreet's](#) CEO, Siamak Farah, in which we discussed the company's SaaS offerings, we sort of reminisced about the early days of SaaS, when the naysayers were many—"It'll never work," they said. "What about security and support?" "Software is a product, not a service." "You can't make money that way." On and on. Initially, there was a pretty unhealthy balance between welcome relief and downright hostility.

Over the years, companies like [salesforce.com](#) and InfoStreet have been re-imagining the software AND services landscape for small businesses and entrepreneurs, essentially leading the way as larger firms turned a critical eye on them. Those same big companies are now playing catch-up.

*At the risk of dating myself, here's a story I'd like to share:*

When I was about 13 years old, I begged my mom to take me to see David Bowie in [Ziggy Stardust—The Motion Picture](#). The rock-n-roll pic fed my fascination, nay, obsession with all things Bowie. As I gazed in rapture at the screen, my mom recoiled in shock at the twisting, gyrating, androgynous Ziggy's antics. In that moment, had I been asked why I was so enraptured by Bowie, I would have been hard-pressed, in my tweenage brain, to find a coherent answer. Needless to say, mom had a long talk with me that night (this was the woman, by the way, who alternated my bedtime readings with the *Psalms*, *Revelations*, and *The Life and Death of Adolf Hitler*).

Over the years, I have nurtured a strange fascination with and admiration for the artist who, beginning life as David Jones, created more identities than [Sybil](#) and has managed to reinvent himself to relevance for nearly 40 years: from Ziggy Stardust to the Thin White Duke to the Berlin Era, and from "Let's Dance" Bowie to collaborations with Queen and Tin Machine (with a little Luther Vandross in the mix) and roles in film and on Broadway, it's safe to say that Bowie has challenged our conception of the static identity as the only way to succeed.

He pushed our notions about identity even further when in 1997, he listed himself on the New York Stock Exchange as a corporate entity. The only thing that has remained constant is Bowie's ability to recognize shifts in the creative and business landscape—and reinvent himself as that landscape has altered. At times, he has been responsible for those alterations. Change, then, is the Bowie brand. At the core, Bowie is the same talented artist he was when I first started listening (although some would argue that "[Laughing Gnome](#)" isn't necessarily the best expression of that talent). But he has kept me listening and watching by proving not just talent, but versatility, while keeping the integrity of his identity.

My guess is that what we are now seeing in social media are small landscape shifts that are moving some businesses toward greater relevance. Companies that can recognize what they have—strong customer base, solid readership, great product offerings, and so on—and correctly and effectively engage new media to help them make that transition to greater relevance, with integrity intact—will reap the benefits of change. If not, I'll let Bowie tell you what will happen:

“I watch the ripples change their size

But never leave the stream

Of warm impermanence

So the days float through my eyes

But still the days seem the same.” (*From "Changes," By David Bowie. Lyrics courtesy of [www.lyricsfreak.com](http://www.lyricsfreak.com)*)

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