Examples of application software – including bespoke software examples

This page is all about examples of bespoke software and how they are different compared to other software. It uses the simple analogy between 'suit' and software to explain how bespoke software is different for others and lists examples of bespoke software that we use in everyday life without knowing it!

First things first, let's **define bespoke software:**

'Bespoke software (aka tailored or custom software) is a computer programme developed for a SPECIFIC organisation, person or purpose….hence bespoke.'

Now, if you are short of time, then watch the 2 minute video below for a quick introduction to bespoke software and examples using a suit analogy and without any technical jargon. **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NquPjE60toA**

We have categorised all software into three broad categories and will use 'suit' analogy to compare, understand and learn about examples of each type.

Now, let's say you want to buy a suit for an occasion. When deciding on buying a suit, you will have three options to choose from:

- **Ready-made – Cost effective, quick, try before you buy**

  o E.g. Word, Excel, Accounting software, Games, etc.

- **Bespoke – Expensive then ready-made but a perfect fit!**

  o E.g. CRMs, Web Portals, e-commerce sites like eBay, Amazon, etc.

- **Hybrid – Pick a ready-made suit and ask for basic alterations**

  o E.g. CRM plugins, Game addons, Extensions, etc.

Ready-made software

Just like a suit designer would research their potential customer's suit preferences (colours, type of cloth, styling, sizes, etc.) to sell maximum number of suits, a ready-made software vendor (AKA COTS – Commercial Off The Shelf) studies their potential customer/business vertical needs and develops the software with all the features and functions they would need to computerise, automate and simplify their business activities.

So, the main objective for a suit designer and a software vendor is always the same i.e. to try and sell as many copies of the software by designing suit/software for masses. As you can imagine, the approach of 'one size fits all' is bound to create a misfit for some customers. In fact, it is very rare that the suit/software will be a perfect fit for anyone. However, when buying, as long as the suit/software is good enough, customers will buy it.

One of the main factors which influence decision here is cost and the ability to 'try before you buy' and this applies to both, suits and software. Another advantage of buying a ready-made/COTS software is that the software vendors regularly offer upgrades to bring their software in-line with ever-changing needs of their customer/business vertical.

Some examples of ready-made (COTS) software:

Gmail, Microsoft Outlook, etc.
These are software applications designed to allow millions of people to communicate via Email. There are no prizes for guessing that majority of user need basic send/receive/read/compose/spell check features which are included in these software to ensure maximum number of people would find the software useful.

Accounting software applications – Sage, Tally, Xero, KashFlow, etc.
Again here, no prizes for guessing that majority of businesses are required to follow the same accounting principles and practices, and it makes sense to buy or subscribe to software that has already taken care of incorporating all the local laws and regulations.

Games – Angry Birds, FIFA, Call of Duty
Games are nothing but ready-made software which are developed to entertain. The companies who develop these games aim to satisfy/entertain the masses by identifying what type of games majority of people would like to play.

Tailored/Bespoke/Custom software

If you want something that fits you perfectly, then chances are you will have to visit a tailor. Along with taking your precise measurements, he will ask you a series of questions about your personal preferences like type of cloth, colour, number of buttons, cut of the suit, number of pocket, style, etc. Needless to say, the result (as long as the tailor is good!) will be a suit that fits you perfectly and will make you stand out in a crowd!

Same principle applies to tailored/custom/bespoke software. Here instead of visiting a tailor you visit a software developer or a software development company and just like the tailor they will also ask you lots of questions on the various features and functions you/your business will need to automate and integrate your business processes. Once fully developed, the software will be a perfect for fit your business!

Again, no prizes for guessing that developing a tailored/bespoke/custom software application will be expensive than the ready-made option.

In spite of the cost, sometimes it makes sense to develop a tailored software application as it might deliver exceptional benefits by helping you to differentiate your business, product or service from the competition. Today, because of advancement in software development methodologies and the wide availability of rapid application development tools, developing and maintaining some bespoke software applications might turn out to be cheaper than you think.

To pick the right one for your business, you can visit **Bespoke Software Vs Off-the-Shelf Software**.

Some examples of bespoke software are:

Amazon.com, Ebay, etc.
Amazon.com and Ebay are classic example of a tailored software. Instead of using a ready-made e-commerce template to sell a range of items, Amazon and Ebay have developed their own bespoke e-commerce platform which connects buyers and sellers. They look very simple to use and that's the beauty of it!

Banking mobile app and online web applications
We have all used mobile banking apps or seen someone use it. Well, it's a classic example of tailored software application which runs on a mobile device and help the users check their balances, transfer funds, etc. No two banks will ever have or share the same software because they want to offer or be seen to offer a better service/experience to their customers.

In summary, any software that is designed for one particular customer/business can be viewed as a bespoke software example.

Hybrid software application

As the name suggests, this type of suit/software aims to offer the best of both worlds.

Let's go back to our suit example here. So, you walk into a retailer to try a suit and find the matching trouser is slightly longer than what you would like. So, you would ask the retailer to shorten the length. If the retailer has an in-house tailor (most national retailers have one), they will happily oblige and sometimes charge you a small fee for the same. But, if you ask lot of alterations or alterations to the basic shape of the trousers or suit, chances are the retailer will encourage you to try a different size as they will be unable to make such alterations because to do so, they will have to tailor the suit again!

The same applies to software. Most software companies nowadays allow for basic customization to be made to their software as per the customer's requirements. A simple example here wold be to allow customers to use their own company logo on all screens and reports. If the software has been designed to allow lot of customization, customers can request the software vendor/partner to modify the features and functions as per their needs.

Again, no prizes for guessing that this customisation will need additional investment and when compared with ready-made software appear more expensive. Generally, software vendors that sell ready-made applications, also offer a 'package' deals which allow the customer to buy the software and customise the same at a reasonable cost.

Some examples of Hybrid software are:

ERP – Microsoft SharePoint, Dynamics, SAP
These type of applications are developed for large corporations operating in various verticals. Generally, these are large software applications i.e. with lots of modules and moving parts that need to be connected and configured by experts to work correctly.

CMS – WordPress, Joomla
WordPress and Joomla are very good examples of hybrid applications. Almost 100% of users of these content management systems customise them to fit their needs. They sometimes install/buy plugins which perform or enhance the features provided out of the box or ask a WordPress developer to modify a particular function or feature.

Advantages of Tailored/Bespoke/Custom software

Competitive edge
Commissioning an expert bespoke software development company in the UK like Schnell Solutions to develop to develop a custom software application can offer a competitive edge by reducing operation costs and improving business efficiency. Having custom software also allows the business to quickly change its course (using the bespoke software) and be the first company to offer a unique service/experience.

A custom/tailored fit
As the bespoke software is developed for a specific set of business needs, the bespoke software development company/developer can design all the features and functions to match the exact needs of the business, which is very difficult to achieve in the case of a ready-made (COTS) software. This allows the business to operate as smoothly as possible without any compromises on the business processes or workflow.

Return on Investment
Just like a tailored suit, a bespoke software application is designed to be a perfect fit. This creates new efficiencies for the business in areas/departments which are not possible when using ready-made (COTS) or made to measure software which force businesses to change their business processed to suite the software application they use.

Training
As the bespoke software is designed for a unique set of requirements for a business, training costs are very low when compared to the ready-made or tailored software because the bespoke software always follows the exact processes the employees would expect it to i.e. it appears as a natural extension to their everyday tasks and processes.

Efficiency
When developing bespoke software application, Schnell Solutions always pays special attention to manual and paper-intensive processes within the business. Because of the very nature of these business processes, they consume a lot of valuable resources (staff) which can be reallocated to more profitable parts of the business. Developing a bespoke software application presents the business an opportunity to automate and integrate such manual and paper-intensive processes and improve the business profitability and efficiency exponentially.

Advantages of Ready-made (COTS) software

Faster deployment
Unlike bespoke software applications, which has to be developed by a competent software development company/developer, Ready-made software is readily available. This means that the business can start to use the software very almost immediately, without having to wait for bespoke software to be developed, which can sometimes take weeks, months or even years.

Risk
The risk in buying a ready-made software when compared with a bespoke software application is very less as the business can always see exactly that features and functions are provided by the ready-made software by way of a demonstration or a trial account.

Investment:
Depending upon the requirements, developing a bespoke software application often requires a team of experienced developers, managers, testers, quality controllers, etc. When compared with buying a ready-made software, developing a bespoke software application often required larger upfront investment. Saying that because of advancements in software development methodology and rapid application development tools, experienced companies like Schnell can make the best possible use these latest developments to significantly reduce the initial investment.

Schnell Solutions Limited is a software development company that specialises in developing bespoke web and mobile software applications. Over the years, we have developed several bespoke software applications which help our customers save costs and improve operation efficiency. If you want to learn more about bespoke software or would like to know more examples of bespoke software, please get in touch and we will be happy to help.