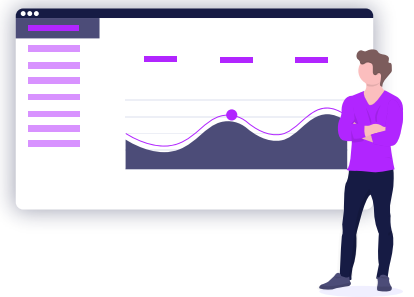
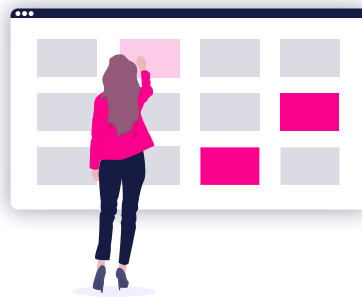
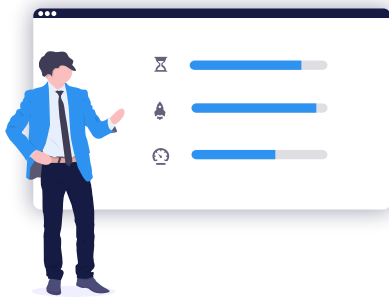


Which kind of PIM should you choose?

SaaS vs On-premise: the impacts on your project



Quable



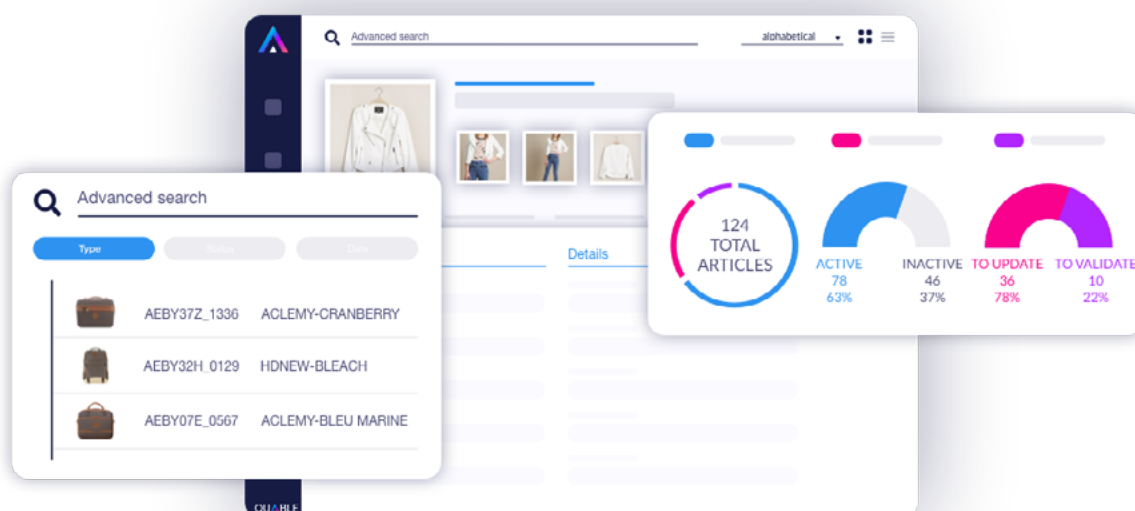
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I - Introduction

That's it, you've made your decision: time to launch a PIM project. With your increasing number products, the volume and complexity of information linked to them, the demultiplication of channels to communicate on... there are an awful lot of good reasons to optimise your product information using a PIM platform.



PIM reminder:

A PIM is a collaborative solution which enables digital and marketing teams to work together on the quality of information linked to their products, and to improve the omnichannel performance of their product catalogues.



But in a context where it is essential to optimise the dedicated tools you choose, questions arise over which solution to rely on, not least in terms of infrastructure.

The arrival of the Cloud shook up the way IT infrastructure was conceived of within a company. IT solutions now interoperate. They meet complementary needs, truly functioning as tailor made “business process suites”.

Practices within companies have evolved at the same time. Today, we don’t just consume “software”, we also make use of solutions and applications which offer direct access through a simple web page.

We’ve started to talk about portability, and use these work tools more and more often from home, or when away on business.

With this shift comes a whole host of new questions, and many come up when putting in place a PIM project.

Here are the first two:

- Which type of PIM should you choose?
- What advantages and disadvantages will this choice entail throughout the project life cycle?

SaaS, Private or Public Cloud, On-premise, Hybrid... with a plethora of divergent terms... it's not so easy to see clear...



II - Global definitions

Choosing a PIM means asking yourself certain questions before you even start looking at the functional aspects.

Each software publisher has an infrastructure it is specialised in, so if you want to successfully implement your future PIM, you'll have to opt for the type of PIM which best suits your ambitions.

Let's first look back at a few brief definitions:

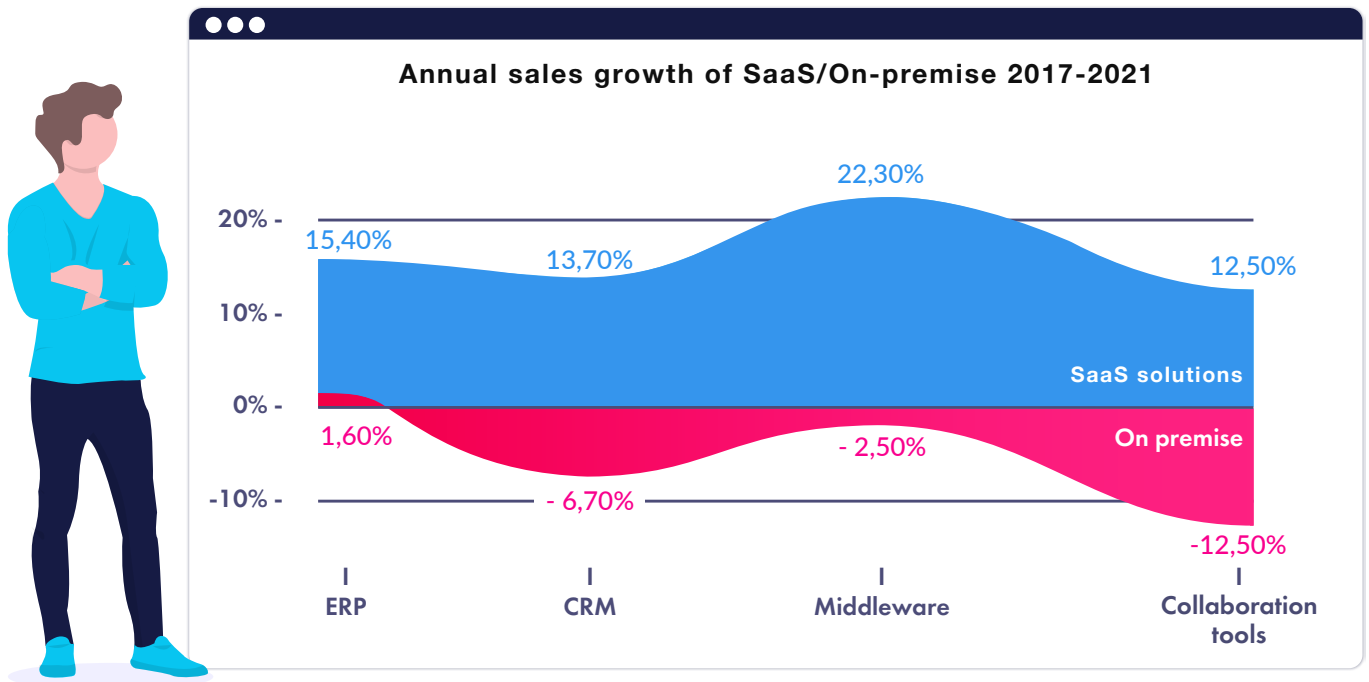
Reminders:

The Cloud or Cloud Computing is the technology which enables you to store information or software data remotely. This data is accessed with an internet connexion instead of a local server or via a computer hard disc.

On-premise is a solution in software form which is installed on the company server (on your premises), and can generally be acquired by purchasing a license.

SaaS or "Software as a Service" is a solution which is hosted on the Cloud (by a third party service provider). It is accessed remotely with a web browser and an internet connection.

Hybrid is a software solution installed in the company premises but which stocks data and / or has features on the Cloud.



So what's the best option for a PIM solution?

To help you figure it out, the following checklist details the questions you should be asking yourself before you even get in touch with a PIM solution provider.



III - The Pre-PIM project checklist

- What volume of product data do I have? How complex is my product repository? (categories, sub-categories, product cross-referencing, cross-selling, up-selling, etc.).
- What confidentiality level do I require for my PIM data?
- How many people will work with the PIM (typology, location, job role, access to the IS)?
- Do I currently have the technical IT skills internally? How available is my DSI to take on a PIM project? Should I anticipate recruitment for this?
- Does my IT architecture have enough resources to host a PIM in my IS?
- How urgent is this project for my company? What set up delay should I expect?
- Which existing tools do I plan to integrate with this future PIM?
- Is my company targeting international and / or omnichannel growth?
- And finally, how is my company budgeting for a PIM project?

Keep this checklist in mind... and let's go through the various implications when implementing a PIM project.



IV - Set up and project timing

1 - Project qualification phase:

The PIM set up process opens with a qualification phase where the objective is to list the internal user needs and adapt the solution to your processes, whether the solution is hosted on the cloud or within your IS.

Among other things, you will tackle:

- The way product information will be structured and linked
- The flow of product information upstream
- The steps and order for filling out a product page (workflow)
- The different channels product information will be communicated on
- The project schedule

This support phase will follow along pretty much the same lines, whether you opt for a SaaS or On-premise solution. The only notable difference will be the quality of support and the skills of the integrator or provider assisting you.

	SaaS	On-premise
Onboarding <small>(Subject to the integrator/provider's skills)</small>	★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★



We would however recommend that you opt for solution providers that have developed, tested and approved a structured methodology for their accompaniment services (we've baptised ours "[Quable Air](#)"). That way you will be able to better evaluate the service, make sure it respects your specification brief and avoid extra costs or production run delays.

2 - Implementation delays:

Once the need analysis has been done and the PIM project has been given the green light, the solution itself will have to be configured. If your PIM is hosted on your IS rather than on the cloud, there can be a significant impact on the delivery delay.

The nature of on-premise solutions can indeed generate extra lead-times.

Choosing to host a solution implies a number of things:

- You have to install your PIM and ensure all the interconnexions in your existing IS ecosystem function.
- It will require your IT teams to spend time setting up the solution and taking care of user access and backup policies.

If you would rather avoid a potentially long (and costly) configuration, and prefer perhaps a turnkey solution, then SaaS is the better choice for you. The SaaS version of a PIM solution has the advantage of making user administration significantly easier, no matter how many users or rights there are.

With a SaaS you can foresee the integration of your PIM with your Active Directory and ensure consistency with your internal IS.

	SaaS	On-premise
Implementation delays	2 to 5 months	6 months to 1 year

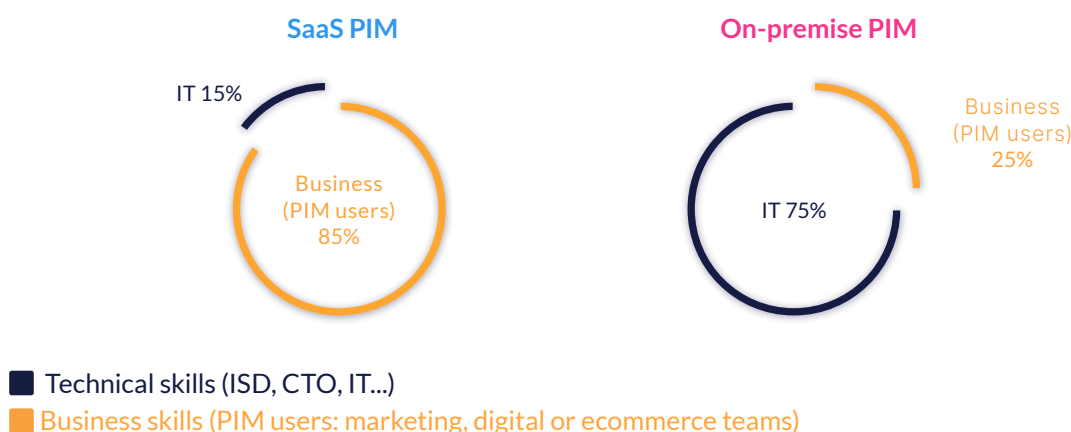


VI - Skills / Human capital

1 - Skillset needed for a PIM project:

The “**Service**” notion of SaaS (Software as a Service) influences the types of skills needed when taking ownership of the solution. If you choose a SaaS PIM, your departmental teams (marketing, digital and product) will not need any advanced technical skills, making it more directly accessible for them.

In contrast, an On-premise PIM solution will require you involve your IT teams as their technical knowledge will be needed to take control of aspects including the maintenance, improvement and configuration of the solution... All while taking the specificities of the company’s IT infrastructure into account.



	SaaS	On-premise
Technical skill level required	Basic	Advanced



2 - Which project teams are needed for a PIM project

The two different types of solutions are also going to affect the kinds of profiles you will have in your teams implementing the PIM within your company.

For the On-premise PIM, it is strongly recommended you make dedicated technical profiles available to support the PIM.

Most companies that have opted for the On-premise solution have built their teams around:

- 1 project manager from the ISD
- 1 IS manager
- 1 to 3 developers depending on the project and technical stacks
- The key users (CMO, CDO, product managers)

SaaS PIMs tend to focus on **“core business”** and a commitment to user autonomy, which means structuring the project and project team differently.

The team in charge of the PIM will be built around:

- 1 project manager (the ISD, the CDO or the CMO)
- The key users (CDO, CMO, product managers)

Which skills for which PIM?

SaaS PIM



1 project manager



Key users

On-premise PIM



1 project manager from the ISD



IS manager



Developers



Key users



3 - Does implementing a PIM mean extra recruitment costs ?

When you are anticipating a PIM project, you inevitably have to think about the human resources you will assign for set-up and maintenance.

If you feel that your current resources are insufficient, you have two options:

- You go for the SaaS which requires very few technical skills
- You opt for the recruitment of qualified profiles who can support your endeavor

Of course, recruitment always entails costs and risks because of the transitory nature of a project. It is also worth noting that it can be difficult to find the right profiles as both technical and operational skills are necessary for ensuring the link with technical teams, and also assisting the departmental teams in their use of the PIM.

	SaaS	On-premise
Do you need to recruit in order to launch a PIM?	No	Yes <i>(If internal technical skills are already staffed)</i>



VI - Data security

1 - Hosting and data responsibility:

For a PIM solution which is hosted on the Cloud, its data will logically be stored on servers which are external to the company. The SaaS provider thus becomes responsible for its clients' product data and will have to provide the appropriate guarantees in terms of the proper treatment and security of that data.

The local hosting of On-premise solutions presents a different configuration because the product data doesn't leave the company. In general, a DPO (Data Protection Officer) is designated internally and becomes the guarantor of the product data for the company. You are ensured complete control and permanent access to the data.

The real question to ask is how critical this data is: is the product data which passes through the PIM so critical that it needs to be hosted locally?

A reminder of the product data stored within the PIM:

- The product references
- The product descriptions
- More specific information (label, origin, size, colour...)
- Product media (if your PIM has a DAM feature)
- User comments and ratings



For the On-premise PIM the data backup process will have to be handled by the company. This is an important distinction as clear and rigorous processes will have to be followed daily so as not to lose any trace or update of the data.

	SaaS	On-premise
Data hosting	100% Cloud	Local
Data responsibility	The software provider	An internal DPO responsible for backup process

2 - Data security audits:

Hosting your product data on company premises with an On-premise PIM solution implies a certain workload. The IT team also becomes responsible for carrying out the security audits necessary to ensure product data is secured. The company can of course always choose to call upon an external service provider for audits, but this again incurs costs.

A SaaS PIM service provider performs security audits regularly and systematically in order to meet demands of the highest level because its client reputation depends upon it. Audits are carried out by third party companies, are strictly neutral, and paid for by the SaaS provider.

	SaaS	On-premise
Data security audits	Quarterly audits led by the software provider	Borne by the company using the PIM



VII - Daily usage

1 - Solution portability:

Employees are becoming increasingly nomadic. For example, they use their work devices during business trips and value remote work options. The arrival of these new usage habits forces project managers to think about portable solutions which favour inter-team work and communication, even when working remotely.

The same is even more true for a PIM, which is centered around the collaboration of local and international teams to produce product pages. That's why it is important to adopt a PIM solution which can both reinforce this dynamic while boosting productivity.

A SaaS PIM is perfectly accessible remotely so long as you have a standard internet connexion, whereas an On-premise PIM will be installed locally and accessible on the company premises via the internal network. Remote access will only be possible with a VPN.

	SaaS	On-premise
Portability	Yes	No (or via VPN)



2 - The support service :

Being able to get advice from your solution provider is valuable when you come across an issue or have a question to ask while using your PIM on a daily basis. The good news is that both infrastructures, (SaaS and On-premise) provide IT support. Service providers such as Quable will ensure an CXM (Customer Experience Manager) is always on standby to aid and assist you.

This dimension goes beyond the basic aspects of a “SaaS VS On-premise” choice, nonetheless, here are a few points to consider when choosing your support:

- Make sure the teams are responsive. Be sure to get estimation times for bug resolution.
- Ask for the GRT (Guaranteed Restoration Time). This clause ensures the service will be reestablished within a specific timeframe if a complete breakdown occurs. The shorter this timeframe is, the better the support team is in terms of efficiency.
- Check to see if a support contact method is assigned to you contractually. Some service providers impose contact via e-mail or even community forums by way of support. Resolving potential problems is difficult without a dedicated contact.

	SaaS	On-premise
The support service <i>(Subject to the support service's skills)</i>	★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★



VIII - Upgrading/ Updating a PIM

1 - Update frequency:

Today's needs are unfortunately (or fortunately) no longer those of tomorrow. Is your company looking to grow, to extend its points of contact with customers and target omnichannel or even international horizons? You will probably be making your PIM solution choice within this scope, and aiming for it to accompany this growth long-term.

It is thus preferable to choose a PIM which evolves over time and to pay close attention to the update frequency of the solution.

An On-premise PIM solution will be more rigid and static. The updates will likely be less frequent, and be included in a maintenance contract, making them more timely and costly.

On the contrary, the internet/SaaS duo, offers innovative perspectives. A PIM solution on the internet enables the user journey to be tracked so as to improve the experience. The technology is also particularly efficient for collecting testimonials which help to improve the PIM.

New features and patches are instantly installed and a product update roadmap is established in real time. At Quable for example, our usage monitoring and direct link with our partners enables us to update the PIM on a monthly basis.

	SaaS	On-premise
Update frequency	Monthly	No update



2 - PIM maintenance:

Updating an On-premise PIM means starting a new IT project. There's no shortcut to go easily from one version to another. New development plans will have to be devised, which can take 3 or 4 months and engage extra costs. Fee-based training will then have to be given to all the users to make sure the new version of the PIM is correctly handled.

A SaaS PIM on the other hand, requires no internal maintenance.

	SaaS	On-premise
Maintenance following updates	None	3 to 4 months + additional costs

3 - PIM connectivity:

How many third party tools do you use today? Are they SaaS or On-premise?

Your choice of PIM solution is part and parcel of your global integration strategy with your different tools.

SaaS solutions work like connectable bricks that can be connected via API to other bricks. The objective being to create an ideal master solution which is totally interconnected. It's this native aspect of the SaaS PIM which also guarantees its evolutivity.

If your CMS, translation solutions, marketplaces and other E-Commerce platforms evolve, the connectivity of a SaaS PIM offers extreme connectability which allows it to fit perfectly into your ecosystem.

	SaaS	On-premise
PIM connectivity	★ ★ ★	★



IX - Conclusion

In conclusion, there is no absolute good or bad choice between an On-Premise and SaaS PIM. It all depends on your usage, needs, and preferences... not to mention budgetary aspects!

	SaaS	On-premise
Onboarding <i>(Subject to the integrator/provider's skills)</i>	★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★
Implementation delays	2 to 5 months	6 months to 1 year
Technical skill level required	Basic	Advanced
Do you need to recruit in order to launch a PIM?	No	Yes <i>(If internal technical skills are already staffed)</i>
Data hosting	100% Cloud	Local
Data responsibility	The software provider	An internal DPO responsible for backup process
Data security audits	Quarterly audits led by the software provider	Borne by the company using the PIM
Portability	Yes	No <i>(or via VPN)</i>
The support service <i>(Subject to the support service's skills)</i>	★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★
Update frequency	Monthly	No update
Maintenance following updates	None	3 to 4 months + additional costs
PIM connectivity	★ ★ ★	★



To take things further

Discover the Quable PIM solution with a demo. Baptiste will be more than happy to answer your questions



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About  **Quable:**

Quable is the PIM & DAM product information management solution for brands, manufacturers and retailers seeking growth. Auchan, Berluti, Bioderma, Cooperl, Club Med, Delsey, G mo, Tryba and more than 150 major brands across 50 countries have chosen Quable PIM to help their omnichannel business take off. Founded in 2013, Quable has 40 expert employees and over 40 million products managed in the fashion, luxury, food, retail and industrial sectors.

More information at www.quable.com
