



Top 5 Reasons to Deploy Desktops as a Service

WHITE PAPER

Meeting the Challenges of the Mobile-Cloud Era



No, the personal computer isn't dead, but it looks a whole lot different than it did just a few years ago. Even though organizations need to upgrade or replace many of their client systems, those physical units increasingly are being replaced by virtual machines. Desktops as a service (DaaS) may be an excellent fit for organizations that need new end-user computing solutions but are conscious of cost, deployment and support challenges.

There's no debate that the personal computer industry is undergoing its most dramatic upheaval in history. Sales of traditional desktops and notebooks have declined precipitously during the past two years, seemingly part of an irreversible trend.¹ Still, organizations need to upgrade their users' client systems for a variety of reasons, including dramatically aging PC inventories and requirements for more computing horsepower to run modern operating systems replacing Windows XP.

IT organizations, however, have been dealing with the harsh economic reality of tighter IT budgets and financial executives' commitment to lower capital expenses for end-user computing infrastructure. As a result, many organizations turned to virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) as a way to deliver enhanced desktop functionality without making big investments in money, time, deployment and support. The move to VDI, however, can be tricky for some companies: VDI does require specialized IT skills that not every company has in-house, and there is an up-front capital investment that companies need for deployment.

The Advantages of Desktops as a Service

But moving away from physical to virtual desktops has too many benefits to ignore, and organizations are exploring new options to make the transition. One approach that's gaining a lot of traction is desktops as a service (DaaS), which enables the move of virtual desktops—and their related applications and infrastructure—to the cloud. DaaS is picking up a lot of support from industry experts, one of which declared that market entries by industry leaders like VMware would make 2014 "The Year of DaaS."²

¹"Gartner Says Worldwide PC Shipments Declined 6.9 Percent in Fourth Quarter of 2013," Gartner Inc., Jan. 9, 2014.

²"VMware, Citrix, Microsoft Desktops-as-a-Service solutions will make 2014 'The Year of DaaS,'" BrianMadden.com, Oct. 30, 2013.

While there are many compelling benefits to DaaS when compared with both physical desktops and too early iterations of VDI, here are five that stand out:

- 1. Financial advantages.** One of the biggest challenges IT organizations face today is finishing—or, in some cases, even starting—migrating away from Windows XP in favor of Windows 7 and 8. However, the newest versions of Windows almost always require major upgrades in client hardware. As a result, many organizations are moving to DaaS to save potentially large capital expenditures. Removing or reducing a CapEx category like PC hardware costs from the financial ledger and replacing it with operating expenses like cloud-based subscription services is extremely attractive to business executives. At the same time, DaaS provides the additional incentive of helping to control operating costs by reducing the need for IT deployment resources and in-house technical support, as well as having predictable subscription costs that are less likely to throw a wrench into corporate financial planning.
- 2. Faster, easier deployment for various use cases.** Organizations can no longer tolerate days- or months-long time frames for bringing new employees or “as-needed” personnel up to speed with desktops. The quest for organizational agility and flexibility is a key driver in such trends as hiring temporary workers or consultants for short-term opportunities, and DaaS gives organizations the ability to provide all necessary desktops rights and resources in a matter of hours. Another problem area that DaaS helps to circumvent is the inevitable upheaval in managing disparate infrastructure resulting from mergers and acquisitions; DaaS deployment can eliminate a major headache for strapped IT organizations, which often struggle with integrating new employees into corporate systems extremely quickly without having to overhaul IT infrastructure. DaaS can also help software development teams set up temporary test beds for development and testing. But one of the most significant areas where DaaS can mitigate deployment challenges is in disaster recovery and business continuity (DR/BC).
- 3. Support for pervasive mobility.** The bring-your-own-desktop movement is now a tidal wave throughout organizations, with users clamoring for mobile access to applications, data and services via their own familiar consumer devices. DaaS helps ensure a consistent user experience, regardless of device format or brand, while standardizing deployment, security and support. In an era where telecommuting and remote-office computing are increasingly the norm, DaaS is an ideal solution for geographically dispersed workforces. This is particularly the case in “always-on” global industries like financial services, retail, and hospitality.
- 4. Security.** Even in the face of improved threat detection, intrusion prevention and security breach resolution, IT organizations still have nightmares that their organization may be the next to suffer high-profile problems around theft of identities, customer data or intellectual property. Since security breaches often take place at the edge of the network, DaaS is an attractive security option because data and applications reside in the cloud, not on end-user devices that are ripe targets because of weaker security tools and more lax security practices of the end users themselves. Cloud-based DaaS also helps alleviate another challenge associated with BYOD by enabling a consistent set of security protocols across users’ own mobile devices, regardless of mobile operating system or hardware brand. Finally, tactical security steps increasingly become the purview of cloud service providers rather than in-house IT, which is a huge advantage because of the service providers’ ability to generally devote more resources and utilize a greater body of experience on security matters than most resource-strapped in-house IT organizations can deliver.
- 5. Avoids drain on internal IT skills.** Few IT organizations can claim they have bigger and more specialized staff today than they did even a few years ago, and that trend isn’t likely to change. This puts a premium on the IT department’s ability to onboard new users faster and more easily, as well as in making the move to virtual desktop deployment at less cost and with a smaller IT footprint. VDI, of course, was the first step in that direction and it has been a real plus for many organizations. But VDI does require some specialized expertise from IT organizations (or mandates that organizations hire outside help to make the move). DaaS, by contrast, doesn’t require the same level of expertise and experience that VDI deployment requires, which cuts down on deployment and support requirements for in-house staff, and obviates the need to spend money to hire external VDI specialists. Time, money and talent otherwise spent on transitions to virtual desktops can instead be allocated to transformative applications and other sources of IT-enabled innovation.

Conclusion

More and more organizations are quickly coming to realize the many benefits of moving away from physical desktops in favor of desktops as a service. This transition already has helped numerous organizations reduce IT management complexity, cut costs, improve workforce productivity and deliver an enhanced user experience by allowing employees to access corporate files, applications and services on any device, any time and anywhere.

As IT organizations increasingly move away from physical PCs in favor of virtual desktops, the idea of desktop as a service is becoming more and more attractive. At the heart of this attraction is DaaS' ability to make deployment and management of the desktop environment far less difficult for IT, while giving users maximum flexibility and a better, customizable user experience. While VDI will continue to be an attractive solution for organizations wanting to move from physical to virtual desktops, DaaS is a great fit for organizations that lack internal VDI technical skills or may not be able to commit to VDI's up-front capital investments.

VMware Horizon® Air™ Desktops and Apps (formerly known as VMware Horizon® DaaS®) help IT departments in nearly all-sized organizations to simplify the delivery of cloud-hosted virtual desktops and apps to end users at a predictable cost. The service enables IT to save time and money, without sacrificing enterprise requirements for security and control. End users can be much more productive, with a complete workspace that they can access from any device, anywhere.

For Additional Information

For more information about VMware Horizon Air Desktops and Apps, go to: www.vmware.com/products/daas/.

