IN THE HOT SEAT

Increase user and workplace agility with desktop
 virtualisation deployments

Computacenter

MAKE A MOVE

Empower users to work more flexibly with seamless access to information and applications from a secure virtual desktop

Martin works in customer service management. He needs seamless access to information so he can provide a rapid response. With desktop virtualisation, he can retrieve the same information from different devices in different locations – whether he's working at a branch office, a logistics centre or a customer site. The result? Martin is empowered to deliver a more responsive service, which increases customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Maximising agility is essential in today's dynamic and digital workplaces. Users, like Martin, need the flexibility to move around an organisation, its desks, its departments and its devices. Fixed end points with fixed datasets and applications don't just impact productivity and mobility for individual users; they impact continuity, quality and profitability for the entire business.

Desktop virtualisation has been promising to deliver greater agility for several years, but few organisations have succeeded in unlocking its full potential. In 2011, analysts forecasted that 30 per cent of desktops would be virtualised; three years later that figure was adjusted to less than 10 per cent.

Low adoption rates are not surprising given that earlier solutions often pushed up both capital and operational expenditure, resulting in a poor return on investment. Thanks to new technologies, however, this is no longer the case.

As a result, desktop virtualisation is now back on the CIO agenda and set to become a key component of the digital workplace.

WHY DESKTOP VIRTUALISATION MATTERS

FOR THE CIO

- Meets business demand for greater agility and flexibility
- Safeguards data accessibility and security
- Increases control and consistency

FOR THE BUSINESS

- Supports rationalisation of office space
- Simplifies the delivery of business continuity strategies
- Accelerates deployment of new user services and applications

FOR THE USER

- Provides wider choice of devices and consumption models
- Increases productivity
- Enables greater mobility

STARRING ROLE

Reduced cost and complexity puts desktop virtualisation in the digital workplace spotlight

After nearly a decade of dress rehearsals, desktop virtualisation is ready to take centre stage. Complexities have been mitigated. Costs have been reduced. Operational controls and processes have matured.

The business drivers for desktop virtualisation have also changed. In a digital world, organisations don't just need to improve data accessibility; they need to improve data security.

Unlike classic desktops, virtual desktops don't store any data locally; it's all hosted and served up from the safety of a datacenter or a secure cloud environment. This not only means sensitive information is exposed to fewer security risks - which are increasingly being aimed at users and end points.

When virtual desktops first came under the spotlight, enterprise use cases were primarily focused on call centre teams, offshore developers and tactical remote access, such as for home workers.

In the last couple of years, the relevance and prevalence of desktop virtualisation has dramatically increased, with everyone from task workers, knowledge workers and power users benefiting from this technology.

Although desktop virtualisation may never become fully prevalent across an organisation's user base, it does form a key part of the digital workplace, a transition many organisations are in the process of undertaking.

STRAIGHT TALK: VIRTUAL DESKTOP USERS
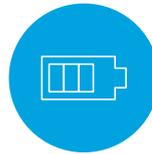
POWER USER
Working from various locations, these users need a significant compute power to run a wide range of applications, which need to be accessed from corporate and personal devices.

TASK WORKER
Requires limited applications and may share a fixed desk with colleagues working different shifts. May roam between desks and business sites.

KNOWLEDGE WORKER
Runs a number of applications some of which could be memory intensive. May roam between desks and business sites or work remotely.

MIX AND MATCH

Analysing workstyles and defining personas helps map the right desktop virtualisation solution to the right user

To maximise the agility and efficiency benefits of desktop virtualisation, CIOs need to ensure they deploy the right solution to the right user. A virtual desktop can be shared, pooled or dedicated. It can be presented to a thin client, a tablet or even a high performance workstation. It can be locked down or open to customisation by the user.

Analysing user workstyles and defining personas will help CIOs map the right form of desktop virtualisation to the right user group. The workstyle analysis should factor in more than just a user's location and role. It should also encompass:

• Information and application access requirements
• Internal and external interactions
• Value of transactions
• Risk exposure
• Energy consumption.

Assessing the compatibility of current and future business applications with a virtual model is an essential first step. A discovery process should encompass not only an inventory of existing applications, but also consider rationalisation options, operating system compatibility, and remediation and replacement strategies.

STRAIGHT TALK: VIRTUAL DESKTOPS EXPLAINED

SHARED
Like passengers on a bus, users have access to a shared resource. All features are pre-defined and there are no personalisation options.

POOLED
As with a hire car, multiple users take advantage of the same resource but at different times. They can make changes to virtual desktop settings, but these will be lost when the resource returns to the pool to be allocated to another user.

DEDICATED
As with a private car, a single user accesses a dedicated resource that has been configured to meet their personal preferences.

STAY ON TRACK

Safeguarding the user experience in a hybrid world with proactive infrastructure management

Despite the different deployment options, a virtual desktop will not be the right choice for every user. As a result, CIOs need to be ready to deliver a hybrid estate of virtual and physical devices to meet evolving business and user needs.

Although applications, patches and drivers only need to be deployed to a single server instead of multiple client devices, accommodating users that need personalised virtual desktop builds can result in image proliferation. This can create management complexity - the exact opposite of what desktop virtualisation aims to deliver.

If a problem occurs with a physical server hosting virtual desktop images, it can impact multiple users in multiple locations. As a result, organisations will need to design and deploy a resilient desktop virtualisation platform to help mitigate such risks, as well as take a proactive approach to infrastructure monitoring.

The quality of the virtual desktop experience is reliant on understanding the usage requirements of users as well as the capacity of the underlying infrastructure and the reliability of the network. More users means more demand and more risk.

To ensure the infrastructure can cope with this demand, organisations need to ensure the underlying hardware is appropriately sized to support the volume and variety of user workloads. Compute, storage and networking components all need to be proactively monitored to ensure ongoing availability, performance and capacity.

DESKTOP VIRTUALISATION CHECKLIST

- Have you captured the business and technical requirements that will determine your solution design?

- How will you benchmark different desktop virtualisation solutions and supporting hardware?

- Have you discovered all the applications that might be impacted by desktop virtualisation and addressed any interoperability issues?

- How will you determine which user workstyles are best suited to the different forms of desktop virtualisation?

- How will you ensure your desktop virtualisation solution delivers an optimised user experience?

- What measures will you put in place to simplify user on-boarding and maximise adoption?

- Have you put platform management in place?

- How will you ensure there is sufficient networking and storage capacity to support a desktop virtualisation model?

- Are there any additional workplace transformations that can be combined with the deployment of virtual desktops?

CATALYST FOR CHANGE

Desktop virtualisation opens up additional transformation opportunities for the digital workplace

As more organisations transform their workplaces and IT platforms for a digital age, desktop virtualisation can be a key enabler for other initiatives that will enrich the user experience.

Mobile apps, cloud services and social collaboration tools will all form part of the digital workplace, and their deployment can be both accelerated and simplified with desktop virtualisation.

For example, by extending virtualisation efforts to the application portfolio, organisations can make line of business Windows apps accessible from mobile devices. This not only provides users with the same feature-rich experience, but also supports the introduction of bring your own device (BYOD) schemes and enterprise app stores.

Office 365, Microsoft's cloud productivity and collaboration tool, is another key pillar of the digital workplace. Thanks to new enhancements, Office 365 and virtual desktops are now much more compatible, which will provide users with even greater agility and mobility in the workplace and beyond.

Agility is just as important for the IT department – especially when it comes to handling the increasing volume, variety and velocity of updates to workplace technologies.

The introduction of Microsoft Windows 10 has fundamentally changed the enterprise desktop landscape. With its 'evergreen' approach to updates, IT departments need to be ready for a more frequent cadence of upgrades.

By replacing classic desktop solutions with virtual desktop platforms, organisations will be able to execute updates from a central point within the datacenter rather than having to apply them individually to an increasingly distributed user environment.

OUR DESKTOP VIRTUALISATION CAPABILITIES

- Computacenter has 30 years' experience in sourcing, deploying and optimising workplace IT solutions

- We have relationships with key providers of desktop virtualisation solutions, including AppSense, Citrix, Dell, HPE, NetApp, Nutanix, Simplivity, VCE and VMware

- The Computacenter standard for Desktop Virtualisation Solutions provides customers with a choice of hardware solutions and virtualisation platforms that have been subjected to rigorous performance testing in our Global Solutions Center and can meet different business and user needs

- Our Global Solutions Center provides organisations with a risk-free environment to test the interoperability of different desktop virtualisation solutions

370,000
virtual desktops managed on behalf of our customers

UNLOCK THE AGILITY ADVANTAGE

Empowering users to work how, when and where they want with hybrid workplace IT

Having an effective desktop virtualisation strategy and solution in place means organisations will be able to take advantage of an 'as a service' philosophy for their desktop environment. With Desktop as a Service (DaaS), the desktop virtualisation solution and associated desktop images are hosted in the cloud instead of an on-premise datacenter. This consumption-based approach helps to minimise costs and complexity.

According to Gartner by 2019, 50 per cent of new desktop virtualisation users will be deployed on DaaS platforms. It states: "DaaS maturity and adoption is starting to accelerate as associated cloud services become a mainstream choice, if not the default choice for new service provisioning."[1]

The shift to DaaS will happen in stages, resulting in hybrid environments with virtual desktop images hosted both on-premise and in the cloud.

As the options for provisioning services and applications to users continues to evolve, hybrid environments won't be limited to just desktop virtualisation deployments; they will become the norm for many workplace technologies.

Safeguarding every user's experience on every platform, whether it's virtual, physical, on-premise or off-premise, will be fundamental to increasing workplace agility.

With the right blend of devices, applications and services, organisations will be able to transform more than just workplace IT; they will be able to transform how, when and where users work.

ENABLING USERS: DESKTOP VIRTUALISATION

SHARED

ACCELERATING DECISION-MAKING
Sharon is a dealer in a large investment bank and needs to be able to make quick trading decisions. With access to a shared virtual desktop, Sharon can analyse complex financial information without experiencing any performance issues.

POOLED

MAXIMISING PRODUCTIVITY
Claire is an oncologist at a hospital and needs to maximise the time she spends with patients. Using a pooled virtual desktop and tablet, Claire can view and update clinical records while doing her rounds of the wards.

DEDICATED

PROTECTING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
Andrew is a designer at an engineering firm and works on commercially sensitive blueprints. With a dedicated virtual desktop, he can not only safeguard his work but also access the extra processing power he needs to run intensive graphics software.

GET IN TOUCH

To find out how Computacenter can help increase user and workplace agility with desktop virtualisation please contact your Computacenter Account Manager, call **01707 631000** or email **digitalme@computacenter.com**

www.computacenter.com

Enabling users and their business

Computacenter is Europe's leading independent provider of IT infrastructure services, enabling users and their business. We advise organisations on IT strategy, implement the most appropriate technology, optimise its performance, and manage our customers' infrastructures. In doing this we help CIOs and IT departments in enterprise and corporate organisations maximise productivity and the business value of IT for internal and external users.