ARE YOU READY FOR DESKTOP-AS-A-SERVICE?

Maximise the opportunity of the latest evolution in workplace IT with Computacenter’s practical guide
Servers, Applications, Storage. The cloud has welcomed them all with open arms – and now it has another recruit: desktops. Pay-as-you go end user services are starting to go mainstream.

Although Desktop-as-a-Service (DaaS) varies greatly between providers, Gartner defines the model as ‘a service offering that deploys a virtualized desktop experience, delivered to a customer on demand from a remotely hosted location’. 

As the next step on from a Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI), DaaS enhances an organisation’s ability to provide a digital and flexible workplace while also reducing costs and simplifying management. These benefits, however, will not be handed to organisations on a plate – relevant use cases and robust governance will be key.

The initial wave of DaaS adoption came from SMEs, looking to boost agility, reduce capital investment and ease management overheads. But DaaS has now gained enterprise attention. And that means more vendors are joining the party, bringing choice for a variety of use cases which organisations need to understand.

Selecting the right vendor is essential for realising the full benefits of this new workplace IT model. Unless deployed correctly, the cost savings that can come with DaaS might not be realised. For example, the total cost of ownership for DaaS can be up to 20% higher than that of an on-premises VDI solution.

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**A NEW ERA IN PROVISIONING IT TO USERS**

**WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM DAAS?**

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<td>• Minimises demand for capital expenditure</td>
<td>• Improves experience with greater mobility and flexibility</td>
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<td>• Simplifies IT management</td>
<td>• Easier access to desktop services from different devices</td>
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<td>• Frees up IT resources for higher value activities</td>
<td>• Use of latest applications and platforms</td>
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1 Gartner Market Guide for Desktop as a Service June 2018
Despite its growing popularity with both providers and adopters, DaaS remains a solution for specific workstyles not entire workforces. Offering limitless scalability and predictable costs, DaaS is well-suited to organisations and sectors that need to scale their teams up and down quickly to meet changing business needs or address seasonal peaks and troughs.

As with all new workplace technologies, cost has to be balanced with the user experience. The nature of an organisation’s application portfolio will often make or break the DaaS use case, as too may the network. Latency can become a killer issue. When distancing desktops from both users and applications, performance problems can occur. DaaS works best when an organisation has modernised its application estate to be ‘cloud ready’.

Embracing more cloud services often acts as a catalyst for rethinking traditional desktop provisioning models and adopting new options, such as Daas. With solutions such as Office 365, G-Suite, Salesforce and Workday already abstracted from an organisation’s on-premises infrastructure, why not extend this cloud delivery model to provision the actual device via Daas?

While the application portfolio defines use case suitability, it may be the strategy around the access device that will dictate any cost saving benefits. With access available via a browser from almost any device, DaaS enables organisations and users to become device-independent.

Provisioning processes and device ownership models can be adapted and tailored to different workstyles. From personal laptops via BYOD to enterprise-owned desktops, DaaS enables organisations to create a hybrid workplace that is primed for the digital age.

### DaaS: Identifying Potential Workstyles and Personas

#### Seasonal Workers and Contractors
Retailers and other businesses that experience seasonal fluctuations in their resource requirements can easily provision new workers with a low set-up cost.

#### Dev/Test Teams
Offering rapid scalability, DaaS also lends itself to application development, and is becoming increasingly popular amongst retail and investment banks to support the development of new digital initiatives.

#### Field Operatives
From social workers and health inspectors to engineers and sales reps, workers in the field often have simple IT requirements that can be easily provisioned via DaaS.

#### Mobile Office Workers
DaaS is a practical solution for people that move about within an organisation but don’t require access outside of the corporate network other than for occasional home working.
SET THE STANDARD

How to select the right DaaS solution for your organisation and your users

Goodbye customisation, hello standardisation. To maximise the benefits of DaaS, organisations need to break with tradition and resist the temptation to ‘tweak’ the desktop environment. This will make it easier to onboard, integrate and move between providers as well as reduce costs.

A standard service will also ensure that updates to applications and operating systems can be applied seamlessly across the entire workplace IT estate. Organisations, however, will still be responsible for updating their client devices/desktop hardware as this falls outside the remit of the DaaS provider.

DESKTOP CENTRIC SERVICE OFFERINGS

DaaS is not an all or nothing commitment. Much like in the server world the aspiration to move to the Cloud often begins with a hybrid model. The difference with desktops is that the proximity of the virtual desktop instance to both their user and the applications are critical considerations to assure performance and functionality. As a result, there are two ways to consider how to approach DaaS:

1. A hybrid Desktop-as-a-Service which enables the user’s virtual desktop experience to be delivered either from a private or public cloud infrastructure. This solution incorporates a modern ‘cloud management plane’, delivered as a Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) from the DaaS provider. Users can connect via any device matching their workstyle or preference to a virtual desktop instance delivered either from an on-premise or cloud infrastructure charged on a monthly per-user cost.

2. A Desktop-as-a-Service option delivered from a public cloud provider with a management and support service embedded within the offering. Users bring their own device to access their cloud desktop, with infinite scalability and full flexibility on consumption.
The evaluation starting blocks

As more vendors enter the market, it’s important to remember that DaaS can mean different things to different people. Often the same term is used to explain both hardware provisioning models [Device as a Service] as well as the desktop service models [Desktop as a Service] when evaluating the different providers and their service offerings, and indeed DaaS as a whole, these are some of the key considerations:

CONNECTIVITY
As with any cloud service, connectivity is key for it to be viable. User productivity and business continuity will quickly be impacted by network issues. Whether users are accessing their desktop instance while on the move, from home or from the office, they will need reliable wired, wireless or 4G connectivity. If this can’t be guaranteed, then the user experience will be impacted.

DATA PROTECTION
With no data stored locally, corporate data will be protected in the event of a device being lost or stolen. The ability for users to access their desktop via an alternative device offers almost instant recovery with minimal disruption to the user and IT department. While large DaaS providers are likely to have the highest possible levels of security, they are also a target for ambitious hackers, and customers could potentially be collateral damage.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
With data hosted remotely, either in a private or public cloud, organisations need to ensure they comply with corporate policies for data protection. Pharmaceutical R&D labs or developers in high-value manufacturing are unlikely to make a good use case, for example, due to the confidential nature of the information being handled.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT
With the desktop build no longer managed directly by internal resources, organisations will need to adapt their change management processes to ensure the DaaS experience is not impacted by any additions or amends made to the overall IT environment.

COMPLIANCE
Although compliance is often cited as a reason not to go to the cloud, an increasing number of DaaS platforms now claim to be compliant with regulations including the PCI (Payment Card Industry) Data Security Standard, SOX (Sarbanes-Oxley Act) and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

USER SUPPORT
While a public cloud DaaS offering might come with the most attractive price tag, it won’t include deskside support, a helpdesk or tech bar, so organisations need to ensure they can embed the service into the enterprise environment with the appropriate support and management.
REAPING THE REWARDS

DaaS is not a revolution but an evolution. In its current form at the current time, DaaS works well as a solution for specific purposes and user groups. Adopting DaaS in such a targeted way can prove highly successful and cost-effective.

For organisations and teams that need to scale up and down rapidly, DaaS can help reduce provisioning times and costs resulting in greater competitive advantage. In a digital age, the ability to respond quickly to business change and customer demand is essential.

As current adoption barriers around connectivity, data protection and user support are addressed, the potential for more widespread implementation of DaaS will increase.

Organisations need to do the groundwork now, so they understand the best use cases, the most appropriate service levels and the potential cost savings.

By partnering with an independent and trusted provider, organisations can ask and answer the questions that will shape their DaaS adoption roadmap. This will help to safeguard the DaaS user experience, ensure that the employee, the CIO and the business realise the full benefits when the time is right.

DAAS SUITABILITY CHECKLIST

Agility
Do you need to rapidly provision for a growing and/or shrinking workforce?

Cost
Is a shift from capital to operational expenditure right for your organisation?

User support
What support will users require, and how will this be delivered?

Compliance
What regulations and legislation do your users need to comply with?

Security
What type of data are your users working with? Are they creating or working with intellectual property that shouldn’t be hosted externally?

Connectivity
How and when do your users work? Will connectivity issues hamper their productivity?

Performance
Do your users need access to high-performance or bespoke applications?
GET IN TOUCH
To find out more about how Computacenter can help your organisation evaluate and adopt DaaS effectively, contact your Computacenter Account Manager, call 01707 631000 or email enquiries@computacenter.com.

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