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DaaS and the Virtual Workspace: The Next Big Thing?

Posted July 30, 2015



We've recently received quite a few questions regarding "virtual workspaces." Particularly in light of the imminent release of the next version of Windows (which, [as we've discussed](#), won't come cheaply for enterprise users), will virtual workspaces be a cost-effective alternative to full computers on every desktop?

The original incarnation of virtual workspaces came in the form of Virtual Desktop Architecture (VDI), a self-contained, "on-premise" server responsible for delivering documents, software, and apps to multiple network users simultaneously. Over the past few years, the reputation of VDI has really taken a beating because, despite the projected bandwidth and storage capacities of that in-house VDI server, network performance invariably seems to fall a step behind—leaving end users frustrated with keystroke lag, poor video resolution, and other annoyances. In most IT circles, VDI is looked back upon as a "novelty"—a technology that never really proved ready for prime time.

Over the past couple of years alone, major advances in the power of Cloud computing have breathed new life into the virtual workspace concept—with far better results.

Through the "Desktop-as-a-Service" model (DaaS), business customers purchase a monthly subscription for Cloud-hosted virtual workstation emulation: software, storage, backup, and upgrades included.

What are the primary benefits of switching to a DaaS environment?

Cost. A monthly DaaS subscription delivers more long-term “bang for the buck” than a traditional PC network or on-premise VDI server. Cloud-hosted workspaces cut the expenses associated with regular hardware upgrades.

Expandability. The turnkey convenience of DaaS means onboarded employees can enjoy a fully functional desktop within only a few hours, without the prolonged hassles of additional software licenses and manually loading and configuring every program.

Mobility. DaaS is an ideal solution for telecommuting and other out-of-office applications. As many employees prefer to use their own personal laptops or tablets, a virtual DaaS environment allows full desktop access on any device, regardless of brand or operating system.

Security. “A chain is only as strong as its weakest link.” Security breaches typically occur on the outer fringes of a network—hackers singling out an end user with inadequate protection or lax “security hygiene.” A DaaS environment centralizes network security at its core, and software patches and antivirus updates deployed from the Cloud protect the full network immediately (all computers and devices, everywhere).

Service. Onsite hardware requires onsite support, such as setup and maintenance. The first generation of VDI required hours upon hours of setting up the onsite servers, plus creating and tweaking the virtual interface for every customer. Because DaaS is hosted remotely, it can be deployed much more quickly, and service issues can be fixed in the fraction of the time of an onsite service call.

In the coming weeks, we’ll expand on the emerging viability of DaaS, and whether it may be the best solution for you.