

Making Sense of Hosted VDI as Business Strategy





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Executive Overview



Traditional VDI or Virtual Desktop Infrastructure, based within office-premises and run by an in-house IT team, has been in use for decades now. However, with more businesses now migrating their workload to the cloud, several business-critical processes are being visibly transformed.

Most significantly, the adoption of cloud technologies as part of business strategy has rolled out the deployment of Hosted Virtual Desktops or Hosted VDI. Faced with the challenges of remote working conditions brought on by the pandemic, businesses now believe that Virtual Desktop Hosting is a business-critical process that kicks in both significant savings and optimal workforce efficiency. Small and medium enterprises, in particular, have adopted Hosted VDI to make the most out of a globally distributed workforce. As we shall find out, Virtual Desktop Hosting has evolved as a secure means to ensure firm-wide productivity with better workload management.

What is meant by Hosted VDI?



Hosted VDI, also known as Hosted Virtual Desktops (HVD) or Cloud Hosted Desktops, are virtual instances of physical desktops that are created using VDI and made available to end-user devices in the form of managed virtual desktop services. These desktops are designed to offer the benefits of mobility and flexibility users being able to access these out of office and at any time of the day.

As a matter of fact, anytime-anywhere access is the primary selling point of virtual desktop hosting because it enables employees to use virtual desktops via personal devices connected to the internet such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones. By means of a process called application virtualization, these virtual desktops run platform-independent applications letting users work on Windows-based applications on Linux- or macOS-powered devices. Managed virtual desktop services by third-party providers ensure that these desktops along with the data and applications they contain are securely stored in a cloud environment under their expert management.

Apart from eliminating the cost of IT management related to physical desktops, virtual desktop hosting outsources all IT operations to a Hosted Desktop provider so that businesses run at lower operational costs and on a higher productivity curve.

How It Works

As mentioned earlier, cloud-hosted Virtual Desktops are synonymous with all-around accessibility. They offer 24X7 accessibility with zero geographical constraints via a set of set of unique login credentials provided by a third-party Hosted Desktop provider.

What this essentially translates to is, employees can leave office at the end of their shift and pick up from where they left off at home or any other location by simply logging back into the system.

This practice of workplace mobility facilitates business agility that in turn drives productivity by bringing down work interruption. As employees move about with their workstation at just a few clicks away, businesses benefit from heightened levels of efficiency, ease of access, and user-experience.



Types of Virtual Desktops

Cloud-hosted Virtual Desktops are typically offered in two configurations. These are:



Persistent Desktops

Persistent Desktops, or the more popular of the two, is also a slightly costlier configuration. It enables users to save desired settings and changes wherein all information is stored on the operating system. This means, on logging back in, the user finds the desktop in the same state as they left it when logging off the last time. Because changes remain persistent throughout the system, these desktops boast greater storage requirements.

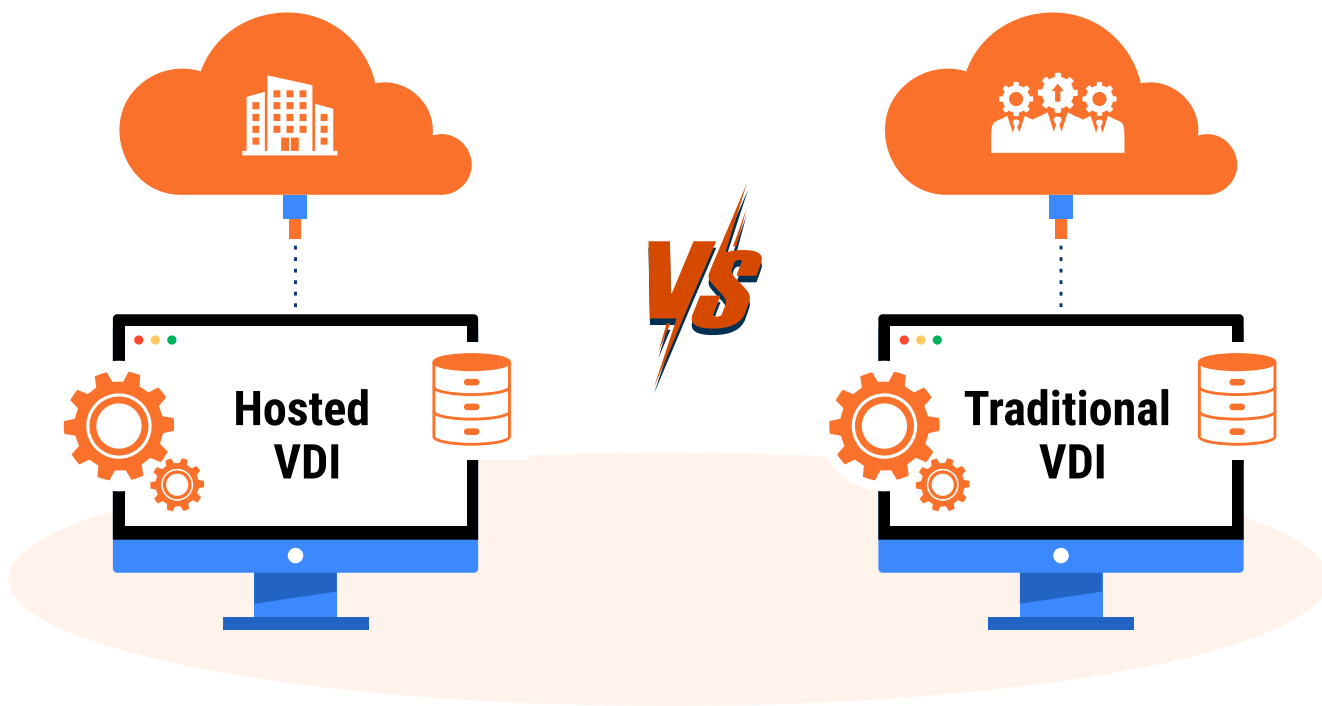


Non-Persistent Desktops

Non-persistent Desktops are designed so none of the user information or settings are retained after the user logs off the system. These desktops are frequently deployed for reasons of security and one-off desktop sessions (think, airport self-service kiosks). On successfully logging into the system, the user is presented with default settings and a fresh session. Because information does not need to be rewritten, these desktops can do without significant storage requirements and are available at a lower cost.

Hosted VDI vs. Traditional VDI

A virtual desktop solution is deployed via two popular routes: **VDI and DaaS (Desktop-as-a-Service)**



VDI, as traditionally understood, is the practice of hosting virtual desktop instances on a central server present on office premises. This is often the preferred choice for deployment among businesses handling sensitive data and in need of security compliance.

DaaS or Desktop as-a-Service has evolved as a convenient and cost-effective alternative to the traditional hosting of VDI. In this arrangement, a third-party hosted desktop provider is responsible for hosting virtual desktops on cloud servers located off-premises..

With the need of an office infrastructure gone, deployment and maintenance of virtual desktops can be entirely outsourced to a trusted third-party provider. This results in a significant reduction in operational expenditure, as in-house IT becomes redundant.

Below is a side-by-side comparison between Hosted VDI (or DaaS) and Traditional VDI (known simply as VDI):

	Hosted VDI	Traditional VDI
01	Virtual desktops are hosted on a public or a private cloud.	Virtual desktops are hosted on a central, on-premises server.
02	Managed by a third-party hosted VDI provider to cover all of hardware, software, and support requirements.	Managed by an internal team of IT experts who are also responsible for deployment and upkeep.
03	Virtual desktops are accessible from anywhere via any device connected to the internet. They are available 24X7.	Virtual desktops are typically bounded by restricted access within office premises using corporate intranet only. For access outside of office, the deployment of VPN becomes necessary.
04	To prevent data leakage, hosted VDI comes with the strictest protocols in place. These include everything from clipboard restrictions to peripheral device management.	Data usually remains secure under the control of a dedicated in-house IT team.
05	Costs significantly less with zero upfront cost and flexible pay-as-you-go plans.	Traditional VDI involves high capital expenditure as purchase and deployment costs.
06	Offers on-demand scalability that responds to changing resource utilization and VDI usage.	Scalability can come at a cost with the need for expensive equipment.
07	As managed services, hosted VDI forms part of comprehensive Business Continuity plans with active data recovery plans at provider's data centers. This makes sure, disasters do not mean business interruption.	To incorporate BCDR within traditional VDI, businesses must invest in a DR site that can run up additional costs.

Features of Virtual Desktop Hosting



Undoubtedly, the notion of hosting virtual desktops on third-party cloud servers sounds risky. That is why, reputed cloud service providers offer the highest security services as part of managed hosted VDI services. In fact, assured security is one of the most advertised features of virtual desktop hosting. The truth is cloud hosting is infinitely more secure than storing data on in-office infrastructure because most network breaches originate in office.

Enhanced Security Measures

Virtual desktops offer a solid alternative to physical desktops that are prone to thefts and wear and tear. Ensuring the security of virtual desktops is no easy task. Given that security is the foremost concern of most businesses, third-party hosted desktop providers adopt measures to guarantee physical security as well as a multi-layered digital security. While physical security includes securely located isolated data centers under 24X7 CCTV surveillance, digital security



entails SSL (Secure Sockets Layer), firewalls, antivirus software, ransomware best practices, protection against DDoS (denial-of-service) attacks, MFA (multi factor authentication), OS-hardening, OS-patching, IP restrictions, TLS 1.3 and 256-bit data encryption and continuous system monitoring. Whether in storage or transit, data protection is a must in every form of desktop virtualization.

Outsourced IT

Virtual desktops are hosted in a robust and multi-redundant cloud infrastructure by the provider. With the latter being responsible for the functionality and security of cloud servers as well as the virtual desktops made available, clients have no need for purchasing or maintaining expensive office infrastructure. Instead, the provider comes in with their own batch of IT experts for care and support of the virtual hosted desktops.

For many businesses, outsourced IT facilitates the ability to do away with an office space altogether, thus enabling them to go all-remote.

Reduced Costs

Most hosted desktop providers offer pay-as-you-go pricing that enable businesses to take advantage of a flexible pricing model. By this model, customers pay only for the number of desktops allocated or system resources being utilized. Thus, capital expenditure for expensive office-infra is substituted by operational expenses in the form of monthly/annual bills. The plans are also scalable and move up or down in response to the needs of the hour, with providers further offering the benefit of switching between plans in real time.

Additionally, Hosted Desktops make it easy for businesses to realize firm-wide BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) goals, bringing down costs substantially. With nominal base offerings and flexible prices, virtual desktop hosting works wonderfully even on a very tight budget.

Scalable Resources

Traditional desktops pose a challenge to enabling workplace flexibility. This is because, the implementation of elaborate physical infra for running an extended workspace can take a massive toll on budget. In contrast, hosted virtual desktops from reputed providers utilize fast servers and consistent networks to deliver reliable performance across any number of resource-intensive applications. These desktops also come with the option of complete customization to accommodate changes in the number of users and applications. In line with the constant evolution in business needs, providers make sure that their hosted VDI solution is scalable and up to the task.



Use Cases of Hosted Virtual Desktops

Generic



Remote Working Thanks to Hosted Virtual Desktops, employees can now collaborate effortlessly with teams and clients while sitting at home.

Software on the Cloud To promote a functional remote working environment, virtual desktop hosting lets users host every bit of application software on the cloud.

Mobile Workstation Hosted virtual desktops can be accessed even when travelling, thereby imparting mobile working abilities.

Every Device Compatibility Hosted Desktops can be accessed via a set of unique login credentials from any end-user personal device that is connected to the internet. Zero device constraints help businesses with the implementation of BYOD policy.

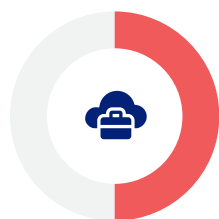
Accounting For CAs and accountants, working virtually on accounting software is possible thanks to virtual desktop hosting.

Contractual Work Hosted Desktops provide contractors with permissioned access to applications for working securely.

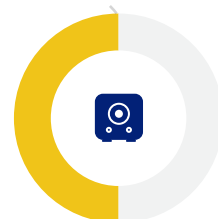
Graphics-intensive Applications Hosted Virtual Desktops support high-graphics output for smooth running of graphics-intensive apps.

Site Maintenance With easy migration to cloud, managing websites virtually is easier than ever before.

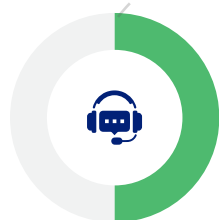
Industrial



IT/ITeS Virtual Desktop Hosting empowers the IT sector with fully managed mobile workstations that deliver great performance and ensure maximum security all at the same time. Seamless, remote access makes it possible for employees to utilize work resources easily and without interruption.



Finance Cloud-hosted Virtual Desktops enable employees at banks, insurance companies, and other financial institutions access business-critical data in real time and across multiple devices over a secure network.



BPO The BPO industry has long benefitted from low-cost remote working thanks to hosted virtual desktops that help that help employees manage customer experience with ease.



Legal Because hosted VDI comes in the form of fully managed services, law firms no longer have to bother with in-house IT to ensure secure client communications and data storage.



Education Hosted VDI has transformed the academic sector by unleashing virtual learning platforms that enable remote access to educational resources for both students and educators. This has been crucial in realizing the continued viability of online education.

Factors that Impact Hosted VDI Pricing



There are many factors that potentially decide how much businesses end up paying to avail Hosted Desktop Services. These erupt from a combination of business requirements and provider offerings. The most important factors have been listed below:

Desktops and Desktop Configuration

Businesses requisition as many desktops as their size would allow. Besides, those with a distributed workforce would demand more desktops to cater to employees working remotely. Therefore, both workforce size and the style of management (in-office/hybrid/remote) would determine the number of hosted desktops a business requires for efficient workload management. Similarly, desktop configuration depends largely on the sector and implies unique bandwidth, processing power, memory, storage, and graphics specifications.

Most providers offer pay-as-you-go pricing options such that businesses pay only for the number of resources they end up utilizing.

The Provider

With the VDI market heating up, the number of hosted VDI providers has skyrocketed. For businesses, this can both be a boon and a bane. More providers naturally imply more options to choose from, but with most providers offering similar services, choosing one among an ocean of likely candidates can prove to be tricky. That is why, one must start with a side-by-side comparison of prices and features offered by the most competitive providers. Pricing tends to depend on the value of the brand, the number of years in service, and the quality of the services provided. But there are certain services such as 24X7 customer support that some provide for free, while others don't. Accordingly, businesses must figure out how important such services are and whether to shell out an extra buck or not.

The Plan

Like the many providers in the market, all plans offered by even a single provider are not the same. Base plans that are available at nominal cost usually cannot size up to the requirements of a developer. So, plans that support light applications come at a much lower price point than those that support resource-intensive applications for graphic designers or application developers. Businesses are free to choose from a variety of plans based on their overall needs, and usually end up with more than one type to pander to different teams with specific requirements.

Length of Contract

Providers frequently come up with flexible pricing options that take into account contract duration. This means, effective pricing depends on long term plans (more than one year) and short-term plans (less than one year).

Predictably, businesses can expect discounted rates on signing up for a long-term plan that binds them to the provider for a considerable period of time. Similarly, subscription plans follow either a monthly or an annual ritual, whereby annual subscription rates tend to be more economical.



About Ace Cloud Hosting



Ace Cloud Hosting (ACE) is an application hosting provider with headquarters in Florida, USA. Winner of awards like K2 2019 Award for Customer Satisfaction, User Favorite Award by Accountex USA 2016 in application hosting category, and Great User Experience Award 2018 by FinancesOnline, ACE is renowned for its hosting services in diverse industries like accounting, construction, real estate, legal, and several others. Ace Cloud Hosting is an Intuit Authorized Commercial Host and QuickBooks Solution Provider and provides a wide range of cloud services including managed server hosting, private server hosting, application hosting, Desktop as a Service (DaaS), among others, which help clients to achieve their business objectives by providing the best-in-class cloud solutions. To offer seamless connectivity around the globe, we have partnered with SSAE-16 Tier 3+ and Tier-4 data centers in multiple locations like Phoenix, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Tahoe Reno, and Las Vegas. The data centers deploy multi-level hardware and infrastructure redundancy to offer all-time availability and no latency.

References

 citrix

Citrix

[Virtual Desktop: What It Is and How It Works](#)



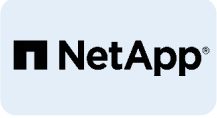
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