





If you are an IT decision maker and your job is to determine the best route your organization should take to fully reap the benefits of the cloud, you might be considering a Virtualized Desktop Infrastructure solution as one possible method of working in the cloud.

VDI will help you move your current IT to the cloud via the virtualization of your current desktop. Yes, it works, but finding a more-comprehensive solution that truly delivers on all of your cloud computing objectives should be an even more important goal. A better solution? Web-based desktops, also known as Webtops.

Knowing where VDI starts and ends is important. The following gives a basic understanding of VDI, its capabilities and shortfalls in delivering cloud benefits when compared to other solutions, and a guide to help you to find the ideal, high-performance cloud-based computing solution that suits your needs.

Limitations

VDI brings your old IT into the cloud. VDI doesn't give you any new capabilities. You'll simply have access to your old IT by way of the Internet.

VDI is simply a back-end component for tech folks to transfer an existing Windows desktop to a data center. Fifteen years ago, "Whoo-hoo!" In the world of today's technology, it's a bit of a yawn. At best VDI can be considered an intermediate measure to give you some remote-access flexibility. The knowledgeable companies of the world long ago moved on from simply hosting a Windows Desktop. This is the age of the dynamic application.



Let's look at end-user capabilities. VDI has no built-in end-user functionality. Unlike other cloud-based computing solutions, like the OS33 Webtop for example, VDI provides no time-saving end user tools. There is no way to manage user accounts or to create groups. No company directory. No dynamically controlled applications directory. No way to post company notices. No way to contact a help desk and track help desk tickets. And no way to add gadgets, like news feeds.

Management

VDI does not simplify the range of administrative tasks needed to manage an IT network; it creates more complexity as it requires ongoing management vigilance.

IT managers cannot just implement VDI and forget about it. If you are managing 100 computers now, you'll be managing the same 100 machines after you move them to the cloud with VDI. You'll also still need to manage each machine's applications, permissions, security, SaaS and collaboration. Nothing will have changed for all the things that matter most.

Here again, unlike the OS33 Webtop, VDI has no built-in administrative tools that allow you to control access rights, provision applications, or set up or remove users in minutes instead of hours.

Mobile Device Access

VDI does not allow you to take full advantage of all the rapidly evolving technologies such as iPad and Android devices due to the lack of adaptability.

Few users will see benefits from running a Windows 7 desktop on their iPhone. Ask a VDI vendor to demonstrate Microsoft Excel on your tablet. Image clarity becomes distorted as VDI visually -- and application-wise -- does not display well on mobile devices.

The OS33 Webtop, on the other hand, is designed to give the user a modern graphic experience with a bright and colorful display on any mobile device or tablet.



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Productivity

VDI has the ability to slow workflow.

If you're a major corporation, with a highly skilled, buttoned-up IT department and you have everyone in the company working from a thin client, VDI can be a plus. For those operating in a more heterogeneous, real-world environment where people work on an assortment of computers, VDI makes work less fun. End users wind up having to deal with two desktops and two task bars -- one that tells them what they have open when they're working online; the other shows what files they have open locally.



What this means is that they have to close one down and open the other to find and access everything they're currently working with. It's kind of like wearing two pairs of pants. You have to lower the outer pair when looking for something that might be in an inner pair pocket. Raising and lowering desktops all day isn't a lot more fun (or efficient) than doing the same with redundant trousers.

Cost

As more and more applications are becoming SaaSified, it's no longer an adequate solution to run virtualized desktops for all users in your organization.

A more flexible, unified solution is required to enable organizations to take full advantage of the cloud. Webtop technology enables you to access the growing number of SaaS-based applications together with existing windows-based applications from a single unified interface, without the need to deploy and maintain a virtual desktop for each user.

Conclusion

In the end, once you see beyond a few layers of misleading enthusiasm, VDI reveals itself to be a solid, for some people useful, but essentially limited approach to cloud-based computing.

If your business wish is to leverage cloud computing to its fullest, we recommend looking well beyond VDI and empowering your IT with a Web-based desktop solution specifically created to take advantage of all that cloud computing has to offer.

This article was written by Jacob Kazakevich, President of OS33, the leading IT-as-a-Service cloud platform for small to medium sized businesses.



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