

Desktop Virtualisation Solutions

Adapting to a new reality in
client computing



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Adapting to a new reality

Businesses today are increasingly realising not only the inevitability of consumer-owned, mobile devices in the workplace... but also the potential for productivity inherent in them. Why? Because they enable individuals to enjoy a highly adaptive, mobile and customised style of working.

As a result, forward-thinking business leaders are looking to IT teams to support the new ways end users expect to work and manage the flood of consumer computing devices crossing the corporate perimeter. For IT departments, enabling end users to access corporate data and applications from any device at any time no matter the location translates into a host of challenges for the IT department, some old, others new.

High on the IT agenda is the need for more efficient, cost-effective ways of managing the desktop fleet while addressing the new realities of mobility, the consumerisation of IT and bring your own device policies. With the release of Microsoft® Windows 7 and the announcement of Windows 8 you may be investigating how technology can enable you to deliver and manage a more efficient, cost-effective desktop fleet. However, this does not come without its own set of challenges.

Legacy business applications that are critical to your business operations are often unable to migrate to a new operating system and the costs associated with redeveloping these are often prohibitive. At the same time, the enormity of upgrading one's entire enterprise desktop fleet represents an equally daunting challenge.

However, the reality of all of these issues that you need to address is that you need to keep the end user front of mind as it is the end user experience which will ultimately determine the success of your desktop strategy.

Against this backdrop, the old IT challenges of reducing costs, securing data and delivering services to the business, remain constant. Desktop virtualisation is one area that you may be investigating to help address these issues... Let's explore how.

Navigating the way forward

Most organisations have started to realise benefits from their server virtualisation deployments and are investigating how similar advantages can be translated to their desktop environment. Vendors, system integrators and organisations have realised that desktop virtualisation is an effective tactic available to address some of the prevailing challenges facing IT teams. However, the desktop and server environments are vastly different and the approach needed to adopt these technologies is not one and the same.

Before embarking on a desktop virtualisation project, you need to define what challenges you are looking to address. In Dimension Data's experience, oftentimes the most suitable solution is a hybrid desktop environment where appropriate virtualisation technologies are leveraged to further simplify desktop and application provisioning and deployment. This will in turn help you extend the desktop reach to new devices and more effectively protect and secure data while meeting end user expectations.

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Demystifying Desktop Virtualisation

Desktop Virtualisation is the **concept** of delivering the desktop, applications and data to end users, independent of device.

Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) is the server computing model enabling desktop virtualisation, encompassing the hardware and software systems required to support the virtualised environment. VDI typically refers to a server hypervisor and management infrastructure that is used to host and manage access to multiple autonomous virtual machines each running a desktop operating system and applications.

Hosted Virtual Desktops (HVDs) are desktops that are hosted within a data centre VDI platform and are accessed over the network via a client device.

Application Virtualisation describes software technologies that improve portability, manageability and compatibility of applications by encapsulating and isolating them from the underlying operating system on which they are executed.

Client-Side Desktop Virtualisation refers to client devices, typically laptops, that can download one or more desktop operating systems and run them on the local device, e.g. offline.



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Dispelling some common myths

1. Desktop virtualisation is cheaper than a traditional desktop deployment

The reality of desktop virtualisation is that it is probably not going to save you money in the short term. The initial investment required to upgrade storage, servers and the network not to mention the impact on software licencing all need to be factored into when deciding if desktop virtualisation is the correct solution for your desktop strategy.

2. Desktop virtualisation is the same as VDI

The term VDI typically refers to only one mode of desktop virtualisation – Hosted Virtual Desktops. There are many different desktop and application virtualisation solutions available today, and a Hosted Virtual Desktop may not be the best option for your end users. Desktop virtualisation can adapt to many more use cases than VDI alone.

3. I won't need to replace the existing desktops

Many organisations expect that any type of desktop device, especially legacy devices, will continue to deliver an enhanced user experience when accessing a Windows 7 hosted virtual desktop. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, especially where there is multimedia delivery or videoconferencing involved. It is critical to ensure that the end user desktop devices (whether these are re-purposed PCs or thin clients) have the capability to deliver the enhanced visual aspects of newer operating systems and applications.

4. I don't need to support tablets and other client computing devices

End users are expecting to have universal access to their data and applications. The better able you are to meet these expectations, the better placed you will be to retain critical talent, while ensuring that you meet the business' demands for security and compliance.

Our approach to a successful desktop virtualisation solution

It's no secret that in the early days of desktop virtualisation, there were some poor experiences amongst organisations that rushed down this path. These days, we understand that thorough planning and design is an imperative. That said, with a structured approach, there is no reason why the appropriate desktop virtualisation solution cannot provide an equivalent or better user experience than a traditional desktop model for most uses cases within your organisation. Understanding exactly where and how a desktop virtualisation solution will bring value is also critical. Oftentimes, the optimal solution will be a hybrid one, and embracing desktop virtualisation doesn't necessarily mean jettisoning the traditional desktop model altogether.

Dimension Data works with you in a consultative, solution-based approach to understanding how your desktop environment can be optimised in order to deliver greater control and standardisation while enabling end user flexibility and ensuring greater security and compliance.

Drawing on our in-depth understanding of the infrastructure and end-user applications impacted by desktop virtualisation, we'll ensure that the end solution is properly designed, implemented and managed to address your immediate business challenges – and longer-term goals.

Our services range from planning and building your environment – to ensure successful project delivery – to support and ongoing management – to help drive down costs and increase productivity.

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How it works

Dimension Data can help you take the most direct, cost effective route to the desktop virtualisation solution you need. Our Next Generation Desktop Solutions cater for a hybrid environment that consists of any combination of traditional and virtualised desktops and computing devices. It assembles the various desktop components – operating system, applications, user data, and settings – in the right combination to produce an accessible desktop that meets business needs.

In working with you to chart the way forward, first, we'll consider and find appropriate answers to the following critical questions:

- **What are the specific requirements of your organisation?** One size doesn't fit all. Typically for different scenarios and different cost profiles, a mix of virtualisation technologies and traditional desktop deployments will deliver the best results.
- **Do you have a clear grasp of your user profiles?** A thorough understanding how people work and the applications and devices allows for a better decision making process.
- **How can we avoid duplicating management tools and processes?** It's possible to introduce virtualisation and create a whole parallel way of managing the desktop – this can have serious cost implications and call for additional skills – which could ultimately discount the benefits.
- **What about licensing considerations?** Virtualisation introduces new ways to run software – which may impact licensing schemes – it may cost more, or unlock new ways to save money.
- **Is your existing infrastructure ready to support desktop virtualisation?** These should be thoroughly evaluated before any desktop virtualisation deployment.

Dimension Data's Desktop Virtualisation Solutions and Services

While the advantages of desktop virtualisation sound compelling, organisations considering a move down the desktop virtualisation path should be cognisant that a successful outcome depends on an informed and structured plan and coherent execution that is aligned to business objectives.

Dimension Data's Desktop Virtualisation Solutions and Services combine deep understanding of the business drivers and technologies that enable desktop virtualisation and expertise in the infrastructure layers including networking, the data centre, and security and applications that need to be optimised in order to deliver on the advantages of desktop virtualisation technologies.

Why Dimension Data?

Dimension Data has in-depth understanding of infrastructure and applications that enable and support desktop virtualisation. Further, you gain access to our:

- Experience with the impact of desktop virtualisation has on supporting infrastructure such as the network, storage, servers, and security
- Understanding of desktop environments at a deployment and operational level
- Proficiency in Microsoft desktop applications such as Exchange, Office, SharePoint and Lync
- Honed data centre skills: we understand the impact of virtualisation on supporting data centre infrastructure
- Ability to ascertain the impact and implications of desktop virtualisation on software licensing and delivery, ahead of deployment
- Centralised deployment and management: Dimension Data's Dynamic Systems solution helps organisations centrally manage the consistent deployment of desktops

Dimension Data then combines the right combination of technologies from Microsoft, Cisco, Citrix, VMware, Quest, and other niche partners to deliver a comprehensive desktop environment that addresses your needs.

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