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VDI AN IDEAL SOLUTION
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Introduction

In order for any business to be effective, it must make IT a priority. IT services have evolved from an isolated aspect of most firms to a critical, organization-wide component, affecting virtually every area of every company. A failure to adequately prioritize IT solutions will result in inefficiencies, reduced productivity and an overall inability to compete in increasingly challenging industries and markets.
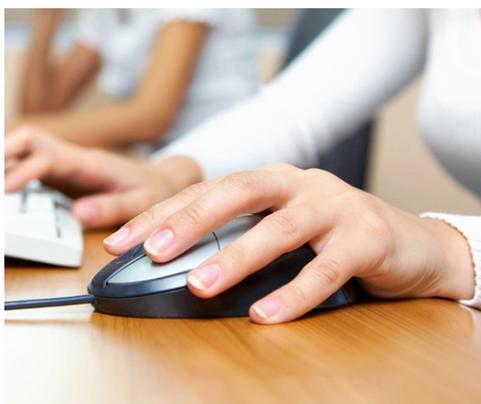
While there are numerous facets of IT services, which companies must take into account, arguably the most significant is the end-user experience. A given IT resource can only prove effective and useful if it is designed to be easy and convenient for employees and other authorized users to access and utilize. Any IT solution, no matter its intrinsic power or sophistication, cannot and will not prove valuable unless it is designed to meet end-user wants and needs. Today users simply have too many choices beyond internal IT. If IT services are lacking ease of use and proper utility IT can be bypassed.

With this in mind, virtual desktop integration (VDI) has the potential to present an optimized end-user experience, and is therefore one of the most invaluable IT services that organizations can pursue. When properly planned and deployed, VDI can make a company more productive and more efficient, while increasing employee satisfaction, thanks to its high-quality end-user experience.

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There are numerous advantages to VDI deployments. Often the three most significant of these benefits are improved consistency, better asset deployment and management and optimized bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policies.

Consistency

For many companies, desktop reliability and consistency are two of the most valued attributes when it comes to their environments. Companies need their employees' desktops to be available in any and all circumstances, and capable of providing a dependable, consistent experience to users.

In a standard deployment, this can be challenging. Employees will inevitably install a wide variety of programs and applications on their personal computers in order to perform their job responsibilities. The specific software upon which workers rely will naturally vary greatly from department to department. It is impractical to acquire the licenses and install every potential piece of software on every desktop. This means that an employee may face limited options regarding their desktop configuration. If there is a technical problem affecting one department's desktops, the company will see a major productivity slowdown, or even a complete work stoppage.

VDI avoids these issues by ensuring desktop consistency regardless of the actual device utilized. By its nature, VDI allows users to access a pre-established, personalized interface via any connected device. The programs and applications upon which the employee depends exist on a centralized network, rather than the device itself. Workers can sit down in front of any device, open a desktop and immediately access the tools they need to complete their job functions.

This is a much more efficient, elegant and easy-to-achieve solution than pursuing software consistency via traditional desktop deployment strategies. Furthermore, VDI is better suited to respond to system failures and other technical problems, as the physical machine is essentially irrelevant. Consistency is achieved, efficiency is improved and the company as a whole becomes more flexible and productive.

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Management and Deployment

One of the other most significant advantages offered by VDI is improved management capabilities, particularly when deploying a significant upgrade. In a typical desktop environment, a large-scale upgrade requires a tremendous amount of effort and, critically, manpower. Numerous personnel will need to devote hundreds or thousands of work hours to the process of designing, testing and rolling out the upgrades.

VDI allows firms to deploy a similar-scale upgrade with far less manpower. This is thanks to the fact that every desktop using this technology operates in the same VDI environment. The logistics are inherently far less complex, and this allows IT personnel to focus almost exclusively on the potential impact of the upgrade, rather than how to deploy the new systems.

In a VDI environment, a company-wide upgrade can take as little as a single day to execute, whereas a traditional deployment will likely require weeks or possibly years for successful completion. This approach can have immense productivity and efficiency benefits for organizations of all kinds.

As Communications Today has noted, VDI as a concept has existed for 30 years. However, it is only recently that real-time capabilities became available. As a result, VDI environments can be managed more effectively and efficiently with a much greater user satisfaction rate.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

BYOD is one of the most popular IT trends currently affecting businesses, and with good reason. BYOD will make a company more flexible and productive while simultaneously improving employee job satisfaction. A Gartner study recently concluded that by 2017, half of employers will have implemented mandatory BYOD policies in their organizations.

Yet for all its benefits, BYOD presents a number of challenges. Notably, companies often struggle to ensure that every employee can utilize the same application via their mobile devices, due to the fact that these devices will vary significantly in terms of manufacturer, model

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and operating system. This issue can undercut employees' ability to leverage BYOD, thereby undercutting the value of the strategy.

Utilizing Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solutions is one way of circumventing this issue. However, this option pales in comparison to VDI, which achieves the same results in a more direct, effective and consistent manner. VDI on these devices delivers the exact same application or desktop across all of the different devices and not a reconstructed representation. This approach greatly decreases costs due to short learning curves, rapid development, and acceptance.

For example, a recent Cisco IBSG survey of more than 1,000 business users found that many participants leverage VDI as a means of replicating the desktop experience on mobile devices, thereby improving the productivity of BYOD deployments.

Whether at home, at a satellite location, or traveling, employees using these solutions can retain access to necessary business applications, programs and information thanks to VDI used in conjunction with BYOD strategies.

Implementation Challenges

Clearly, there are a number of serious, potentially transformative benefits which firms can enjoy by embracing VDI. However, achieving an effective VDI deployment is a complex, involved process with which many companies struggle. There are numerous considerations which must be accounted for and addressed to ensure that the VDI solution, once implemented, performs at maximum efficiency. If any of these are overlooked, the overall utility of the VDI solution will be significantly impacted.

Most notably, many organizations struggle to accurately assess their needs. These include infrastructure requirements, minimum bandwidths, and workstation-to-server ratios and more. Because of the complexity of VDI deployments, many firms, lacking experienced IT personnel, will struggle to correctly judge organizational needs in these areas, and VDI value will be lost as a result.

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The Bell Techlogix Advantage

Considering these challenges, organizations interested in taking advantage of VDI would be well-advised to work closely with a technology partner with the experience and dedication to offer
top-quality planning, design, oversight, and support.

Bell Techlogix is ideally situated to provide these services. Our Infrastructure Management Services (IMS) practice delivers our VDI offerings through professionally trained and experienced personnel, using state-of-the art tools and methods. Our deep expertise in complex, virtualized environments allows us to boast an extremely successful track record in VDI implementations. Our IMS team has been involved in VDI implementations ranging from hundreds to tens of thousands of desktops. As a result, Bell Techlogix has perfected the ability to accurately gauge our clients' VDI needs, greatly reducing the risk that can compromise overall effectiveness.

Furthermore, Bell Techlogix offers comprehensive VDI assistance. We help our clients through every stage of the VDI integration process, from design to implementation to ongoing management. At no point are our customers left to fend for themselves while trying to navigate the intricacies of VDI environments.

Bell Techlogix also offers world-class service desk support. This ensures that once the VDI solution is in place, organizations can continue to reap the benefits of the deployment in a constant, optimized manner, with assistance available at any time and for any problem that may arise.

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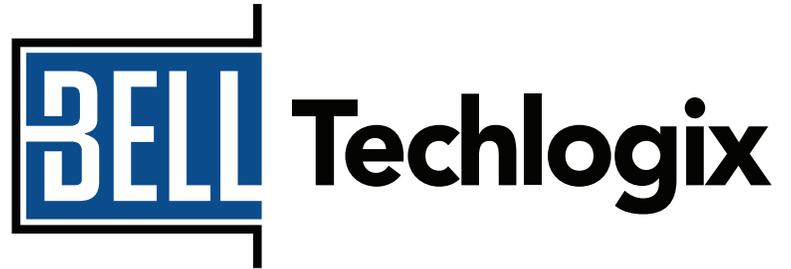
Conclusion

VDI has the potential to serve as one of a firm's most valuable resources. Retailers, academic institutions, health care companies, financial institutions manufacturers, and countless other organizations have experienced major benefits from VDI, and more are pursuing these solutions every day.

However, it is important to recognize that VDI can only prove useful when deployed in an intelligent, thoughtful manner, overseen by experienced professionals. Organizations eager to utilize VDI technology should therefore consider partnering with Bell Techlogix, to ensure maximum productivity and optimal efficiency from their VDI deployments. •

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