

# SearchVirtualDesktop.com

## A DaaS market pricing comparison

By Ed Tittel

The consensus has been growing that cloud-based access to user desktops is a technology deployment option worth considering, and, in many cases, adopting. So if you want to go down that path, what tools are available to do so?

The movement that's afoot is to equip virtual PCs in the cloud with the access, applications and horsepower that users need, which they may then access using the device of their choice. A variety of options exists for organizations to investigate, and perhaps choose, some kind of [Desktop as a Service](#) (DaaS) offering. Here are just a few of the possibilities in [today's DaaS market](#):

### Amazon WorkSpaces

The impetus for [organizations' curiosity and research](#) into DaaS got kicked up by one gigantic notch when Amazon Inc. announced its WorkSpaces product, built atop the [Amazon Web Services](#) (AWS) platform.

Let's treat [Amazon WorkSpaces](#) as a "poster child" for the DaaS market. It establishes a baseline against which to measure other, similar DaaS offerings. Amazon prices individual virtual desktops between \$35 and \$75 per user per month. In a blog post presenting a hypothetical scenario, Amazon describes a target virtual machine as [supporting](#) one virtual CPU, 4 gigabytes of RAM and 50 GB of user data storage space, along with 50 GB additional for an OS volume (probably [Windows 7 SP1](#) or Windows 8).

Amazon's analysis of this situation shows that its own costs (\$43.33 per user per month) work out to less than half the cost of a buy-it-yourself/run-it-yourself virtual desktop environment. (It estimates that TCO at \$106.36 per user per month.) Although this is one vendor's opinion, it gets at the crux of the case for DaaS pricing -- namely, that it's cheaper than on-premises VDI.

It does not, however, factor in the price of the devices that users would employ to access those virtual desktops, nor the costs associated with the infrastructure those devices need to function securely on. It's important to remember that such TCO comparisons don't usually include the gear and infrastructure that must be purchased and maintained. They also do not factor in the [costs of BYOD](#) and making sure users practice safe computing by honoring access, privacy and confidentiality controls.

### DaaS from tuCloud

An early player in the DaaS market, [tuCloud Inc.](#) aims at organizations with 100 or more users in need of virtual desktops. The company shows significant maturity and complexity in its options, with support for many peripheral devices (USB, printers, multiple monitors, [smart card authentication](#)), audio, VoIP, streaming media, and even offers access to virtualized GPUs for high-end 2-D and 3-D graphics and games.

Fully managed desktops start at about \$30 per user per month, but users who need more power, processing capabilities and device support can spend up to double that price for add-ons. TuCloud also

offers the [free DaaS Engine](#), which can even be used to host virtual desktops on-premises.

## VMware/Deskton

When VMware announced its acquisition of [long-time DaaS player Deskton](#) Inc. in October 2013, the real value of this market became obvious. It's still not clear how VMware will price and deliver virtual desktops from the cloud, though the company's [Horizon Suite](#) makes the broad outlines clearer.

Its current offerings are sold in 10-user packs for \$1,815 to \$3,750 per year (\$15.13 to \$31.25 per user per month) but requires purchasers to obtain and manage their own OS and application licenses for the desktops that are accessed through VMware-supplied cloud services.

That may change once VMware fully digests the Deskton organization. Deskton's VDI persistent desktop, user session nonpersistent desktop and virtualized desktop application services should bring more flexibility to VMware overall. Deskton's [FAQ](#) also indicated that "...for most customers, the price will be \$35-40 per month," which is in keeping with VMware's pricing models and those of the competition.

As with most other DaaS products, virtual desktops may be accessed using thin clients, PCs, Macs, iPads and iPhones, and Android devices (including Kindle Fire and B&N Nook devices), plus Linux-based Chromebooks, tablets and so forth.

## Citrix-based and other DaaS providers

A vast array of offerings have been constructed using [Citrix XenApp](#) and [XenDesktop](#), including [Rackspace](#), which even has a product category aimed at providing hosting options for service providers to put DaaS offerings together. Even [equipment vendors](#) such as Dell (Dell Desktop as a Service) are starting to find their way into the DaaS market.

To get a sense of what it's like to shop in this market, take a look at [this snippet from application hosting provider Apps4Rent](#). Products start at around \$25 per user per month, but those offer very limited storage and software options. Even at the highest price (\$50 per user per month), what's available is appealing to organizations of all sizes and scales: Even a \$1,000 PC amortized over 36 months, with costs for licenses and maintenance, usually costs over \$50 per month, all told.

## It's a jungle out there!

There are thousands of companies of all sizes and levels of competency competing for your [DaaS dollars](#). This makes it especially important to shop with care. Make sure that service contracts are sufficiently buyer-friendly and you have recourse and protection should problems arise, services be delayed, or a provider go out of business or declare bankruptcy.

Consolidation in the DaaS market is inevitable and likely to occur in the near future, which makes a good argument for choosing solid, well-established providers. Anything less could invite disaster.

*11 Dec 2013*

All Rights Reserved, [Copyright 2008 - 2015](#), TechTarget | [Read our Privacy Statement](#)