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Virtualization

Desktop as a Service vs. VDI – What's the Difference?

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Organizations exploring virtual desktop solutions generally select between Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) and Desktop as a Service (DaaS) solutions. Both are cloud-hosted desktops. Superficially, both serve a very similar function.

However, deciding which solution is right for an organization – then committing to that solution – can scare even seasoned IT professionals.

Choosing between DaaS vs. VDI is much like assessing any technological need. Businesses should consider the pros and cons of each platform and see how each solution meets their business goals and needs. This should be done even before a cost analysis is performed.

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What are DaaS and VDI?

VDI is when virtual desktops are served through on-site technology solutions. A hardware stack is maintained by IT

administrators and usually located on-site. This is how virtual desktops have traditionally been deployed.

DaaS is an approach that allows IT to outsource its desktops to an outside service provider. Basically, it's like VDI, but as a cloud application. As cloud services have become more reliable and cost-effective, DaaS has grown to be one of the top methods for deploying virtual desktops.

Desktop as a Service vs. VDI

Though both sound similar (and honestly, they serve many similar functions), there are some unique pros and cons for each.

Desktop as a Service (DaaS) Pros

With DaaS, there is no need for on-site technology infrastructures. IT admins no longer need to worry about managing the technology stack. (This is because there is no stack, instead allowing the third-party vendor to manage hardware instead.)

This allows IT resources to be reallocated for managing virtual desktops, clients, and applications.

Outsourcing desktop virtualization to the cloud provides greater flexibility, mobility, and general ease-of-experience for virtual desktop users and administrators.

In many instances, DaaS allows users to access their desktops on common, inexpensive devices (such as retail computers or mobile devices).

Desktop as a Service (DaaS) Cons

Some companies are hesitant to outsource their computing to a third party. Trust is a major consideration when handing data to the DaaS provider.

Careful consideration must be made to ensure data is stored securely when it is handed over to the DaaS vendor.

Connectivity is another important issue. Since DaaS relies on an internet connection, service outages can affect the ability of users to access their virtual desktops. In many cases, organizations can obtain compensation for outages during internet failures.

One of the greatest challenges currently faced by DaaS is software licensing. Because DaaS is such a relatively new technology, major software vendors do not have cost-efficient solutions for it yet. Microsoft, for example, does not provide any service provider licence agreements.

Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) Pros

VDI's greatest strength is that it offers on-site control. With full control over hardware, software, and data, this is an ideal solution for highly sensitive computing environments. This greater degree of control also lends itself well to customization – something pre-packaged DaaS solutions sometimes struggle to deliver. Having the data on-site also resolves any issues with data ownership.

Because VDI is a more established technology than DaaS, software licensing is somewhat more mature.

Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) Cons

IT administrators are completely responsible for the management of VDI implementations. Any hardware upgrades must be performed in-house, sometimes requiring a significant investment in resources. This can greatly reduce the agility of technical solutions for an organization.

Additionally, more care must be placed in monitoring the infrastructure. Localized threat detection solutions must be implemented and maintained to avoid data breaches.

Finally, though software licensing is more mature on VDI solutions, obtaining the proper licenses to properly create necessary virtual desktop environments can be expensive and complicated depending on the needs and size of the organization.

Which Should You Choose?

Deciding between SaaS vs. VDI depends on your information infrastructure and business needs. Each business environment is unique and thus requires a unique analysis to make an informed judgment of which solution would be better. Contact Patriot today to schedule a consultation to find the best solution for your organization.

Learn more about how your organization can increase workforce mobility, improve security, and reduce costs with Desktop as a Service.

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