



Essential Guide

## What you need to know about cloud desktops and DaaS providers

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Many IT shops that do VDI or want a cheaper alternative look at cloud-hosted desktops, but DaaS isn't all sunshine and rainbows. There are some downsides to consider.



### Introduction

Desktop as a Service tempts IT pros with the promise of less complexity and lower costs than VDI, but the technology has some downsides as well.

The technology to bring Desktop as a Service (DaaS) to IT departments has been around for quite some time. At the most basic level, it's a virtual desktop delivery model in which desktops live in the cloud. That's a clear oversimplification, however; there's a lot more to DaaS than that. If you're considering adopting the model, there are pros and cons you should consider. Upsides to choosing DaaS over virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) include the stable costs and the ease of management. But the downsides are potential licensing complexity, application compatibility problems and more.

To get up to speed on the basics, the deep-dive data and the reasons shops compare cloud desktops and VDI, check out this guide.

### 1 Definitions

#### Glossary

Learn all the terms you need to know about cloud-hosted desktops.

[Desktop as a Service \(DaaS\)](#)

[virtual desktop infrastructure \(VDI\)](#)

[Desktop as a Service provider \(DaaS provider\)](#)

[VDA \(Virtual Desktop Access\)](#)

[Windows as a Service \(WaaS\)](#)



## 2 Cloud desktops versus VDI

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### Evaluating virtual desktop delivery methods

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The principle of cloud desktops has been around for more than 10 years, but it's only just begun to gain a foothold in terms of adoption. That could be because IT shops are interested in VDI but can't front the money for it, or because the cloud is just a hot-button topic these days. Either way, many people don't know the details of DaaS technology or how it compares to VDI. Start here for the basics on how it works, how it's different from VDI and why the comparisons aren't necessarily fair.

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News

#### It's so new, IT can't keep up

VDI has seen pretty slow adoption -- some experts think it will never crack 20% -- so what does that say about how quickly organizations will adopt cloud desktops? There are tons of options out there now, and they'll just improve over time. [Continue Reading](#)

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News

#### If your VDI pilot failed, look to DaaS

Many companies try to get VDI off the ground but find that it's too expensive or that users reject it. Especially in small companies where VDI is often cost prohibitive, DaaS can be a great option because you're taking advantage of infrastructure someone else already built and has pledged to maintain. [Continue Reading](#)

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Feature

#### DaaS doesn't fall far from the VDI tree

It might seem like DaaS and VDI are very different, but the two share a lot of the same benefits, including easier desktop management, more flexibility and mobility, and less hardware. They also both come with licensing complexity. But of the two, only DaaS brings cloud security concerns. [Continue Reading](#)

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Opinion

#### Predictable cost, scalability make cloud desktops IT's sweetheart

For many VDI projects, costs can balloon down the line, and the infrastructure is hard to scale up and down on your own. But with a subscription-based, cloud-centric model, costs are predictable over the long term, and you can scale quickly in either direction if you need to. And with DaaS, it can be easier to set up a pilot program. [Continue Reading](#)

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News

#### The DaaS vs. VDI talk isn't fair

The DaaS cost models that vendors such as Amazon push are flawed. When you compare the highest-priced VDI software with all the bells and whistles to the lowest-priced DaaS setup based on Server images, of course DaaS is going to look cheaper. But you can't compare Windows 7 to Windows Server. They're just not the same thing. [Continue Reading](#)

## 3 Dig deeper on DaaS

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### Technical details

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DaaS can be confusing. For example, did you know that some application delivery techniques are technically DaaS? And there's a big difference between hosting Windows Server images in the cloud and hosting desktops. Don't forget about the potential licensing costs and complexity that can come with DaaS -- they mean that sometimes cloud desktops won't save money over VDI. Sink your teeth into all these topics and more.

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Tip

### **Apps from the cloud are DaaS**

If you host applications in the cloud so you can deliver them to users, that's technically considered DaaS. Why? Because applications need a desktop OS in order to run. Even in the cloud, the apps are running on a desktop, but when it gets to users, the desktop is invisible. [Continue Reading](#)

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Tip

### **DaaS dollars and sense**

When you're looking at deploying cloud desktops, consider how much it's going to cost you and which providers and platforms fit your use case. As more options enter the DaaS fold, it's only natural that competition will affect prices. [Continue Reading](#)

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Tip

### **Savings are subjective**

Depending on which provider and platform you settle on, deploying cloud desktops may not save money over VDI in the long run. Management costs -- because you still need to maintain and update images, applications, security and the network -- subscription fees and hardware requirements all play into how much cash stays in the company kitty. [Continue Reading](#)

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Tip

### **You're still on the hook for licensing**

With hosted desktops, you have to license the Windows OSes, the desktop virtualization software and the endpoint devices. Additionally, every DaaS vendor and service provider handles licensing in its own way. Some providers need you to bring your own Virtual Desktop Access licenses. [Continue Reading](#)

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News

### **Why Microsoft licensing complicates doing "true" DaaS**

Windows desktop OS licensing restrictions make it really hard for companies to do "real" DaaS. Instead, DaaS vendors such as Amazon and VMware skin Windows Server 2008 R2 images to look like Windows. It works and customers want it, but it's not a true desktop. [Continue Reading](#)

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News

### **Windows Server images just aren't as good**

Hosted virtual desktops that are based on Windows Server images have more horsepower and resources, and customers can assign multiple CPUs to power the desktops. But there are desktop- and application-compatibility problems that come with using server rather than desktop images [Continue Reading](#)

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## **4 Picking teams**

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### **Choosing a DaaS provider**

Just like some rectangles are squares, some DaaS providers are platforms -- but not all platforms are providers, and not all providers are platforms. If that's got your head spinning, don't fret. There are ways to find the right provider and platform for you, but you'll have to take charge. Make sure you ask the right questions and negotiate a service-level agreement (SLA) that sways in your favor.

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Tip

### **DaaS providers and platforms: When a rectangle is a square**

In the DaaS market, there are many providers, but not as many platforms. The platform is what cloud desktops run on, and providers are the companies you buy that service from. For example, VMware has a platform and is a provider, but if you want to host desktops on tuCloud infrastructure, you'll need to talk to a provider that has a relationship with that platform. [Continue Reading](#)

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Tip

### **Five questions to take on DaaS provider speed dates**

Before you pick a DaaS provider, it's important to ask questions about what would happen in the event of an outage, how the provider splits up resources among virtual desktops and what happens to user profiles. [Continue Reading](#)

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Tip

### What you can expect from DaaS providers

Not all DaaS providers are created equal. Some vendors and platforms might not support the clients, OSes or applications you need. Management consoles and capabilities also differ from one product to the next. The provider you choose should have an SLA that outlines how the company will handle security breaches and outages. [Continue Reading](#)

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Opinion

### Why Amazon WorkSpaces is unique

With Amazon WorkSpaces, customers can pay by the desktop, or by the month. Amazon can afford to offer that because it has such a huge presence in the cloud market. While other DaaS providers might need to add server, storage and network hardware to bring in more customers, Amazon already has all that. [Continue Reading](#)

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## 5 Podcast

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### Listen in

If you're sick of hearing the phrase "The Year of VDI" then you're in luck.

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Podcast

### It's the Year of DaaS!

No more 'Year of VDI' predictions. We've moved on: It's now the Year of DaaS. [Continue Reading](#)

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## 6 Quiz

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### Test yourself

Now that you're an expert on Desktops as a Service, take this quiz to see how much you really know about DaaS providers and pricing.

[Take This Quiz](#)

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