News   Blogs   Newsletters   Videos   Events   More

Virtualization   Disaster Recovery   Server   PC   Network Storage   Storage Management   Green IT   White Papers   Webcasts   Tests

Virtual desktops: User tips from the trenches

Virtual desktops offer benefits, but it can be tricky technology, veterans say.

By *Tim Greene*, Network World
October 18, 2012 03:51 PM ET

2 Comments   Print

Network World - The lure of virtual desktop infrastructure - less costs for endpoints, reduced power requirements, lower management costs, better security - is compelling but mastering the environment is tricky, say users that have embraced the technology.

VDI is not for everybody, customers agree, but despite its pricey initial costs and the need to tweak in order to keep performance high, interest in the technology is growing, says IDC, with sales of virtual client computing to grow from an actual $2.3 billion in 2011 to a projected $3 billion-plus by 2015, a third of that specifically VDI.

RELATED: VMware Faces Critical Turning Point

MORE: Location data will be Holy Grail for real-time apps, tech CEOs say

For instance, Beaufort Memorial Hospital in South Carolina, deployed VDI to executives about a year and a half ago, and it reaped security benefits.

Rather than hundreds of hard drives distributed on workstations around the hospital that contained patient information, all that data was stored centrally. None of them was stored on the workstations themselves, says Ed Ricks, vice president of information systems and CIO at the hospital.

Since power consumption for the virtual machine hardware is less, the hospital uses less power and actually received a rebate for that savings from the local power utility.

Help call volume is down, partly because users can self-help for common problems like forgotten passwords. VDI helps bring electronic medical records to the point of service, something that has won the hospital federal and state grants to help implement the system because it promotes "meaningful use" of EMR in accordance with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

He recommends that anyone entering VDI make use of their vendors to evaluate and upgrade their networks first to be sure the infrastructure can handle the traffic quickly enough to give fast response times to applications. VDI vendors have been through it before so take advantage of their knowledge, he says.

Ricks started out testing in a small clinical area to learn workflows and how nurses actually used their machines to determine what desktop image and what roaming capabilities they would need. Knowing what each class of user needs is essential to a successful deployment, he says.

Then educate them about how VDI works and how it differs from the PC terminals they used before.

VDI in medical settings is popular, say John Hoang, Solution Architect, Barbara MacKenzie, IS operations and infrastructure manager at Sydney Adventist Hospital in Australia, a 300-bed facility using VMware VDI products.

One impediment to adoption was enabling single-sign-on for doctors and other clinicians making rounds who have to use multiple different Samsung zero client endpoints per day depending on what ward they're on, Hoag says. "Clinicians don't want to be obstructed by logging in and out 60 times a day," he says. "If it takes a minute each time, that's a lot of minutes."

He's trying out a badge system made by Imprivata that allows the workers to tap the badge and call up their virtual desktop at a new location with all their apps logged in so long as they have already established a VDI session somewhere on the network.

1 2 3 4   Next >

2 Comments   Print

Most Read

[A giant radio telescope, a small school and Wi-Fi problem](#)

[Can close source software transition to the GPL successfully?](#)

[Researchers devise new attack techniques against SSL](#)

[Hypervisor startup is virtualizing virtualization](#)

[Which Linux distro is best? Survey says: Slackware](#)

From CIO.com

[25 Crazy and Scary Things the TSA has Found on Travelers](#)

[12 Common IT Hiring Mistakes and How to Avoid Them](#)

[2013's 25 Geekiest 25th Anniversaries](#)

[9 iPhone-iPad Apps That Invade Your Privacy, and 1 That Doesn't](#)

[Read more at CIO.com](#)

From CSO Online

[20 notorious worms, viruses and botnets](#)

[Big screen con artists: 7 great movies about social engineering](#)

[ATM fraudster faces jail after skimming 9,000 PINs](#)

[3 reasons why employees don't follow security rules](#)

[Read the latest from CSO Online](#)

Like

Comments powered by   Our Commenting [Network](#) | [Policies](#) | [Privacy](#)

Add New Comment

[Login](#)

Type your comment here.

Showing 2 comments

Sort by newest first ▼

AC Reno

Network Infrastructure is one of the many aspects, so is the back-end storage the VDI is running out of. From experience Fiber Channel is the way to go, the latency of iSCSI may not seem like a concern, just wait until it gets under heavy load with network latency and the bottle neck's begin.

10/19/2012 08:29 AM ⚑   Like   Reply

[Crystal Bedell](#)

There is only a brief mention of the need to evaluate the network infrastructure. This is an important point, and I'd also add the importance of testing end user access from the LAN, WAN and VPN. Each of these connections will have varying access speeds and where access speeds from the LAN may be sufficient, the other two may not. -- Crystal Bedell, http://tinyurl.com/cd5gtuw

10/18/2012 09:33 PM ⚑   Like   Reply

✉ [Subscribe by email](#)   🔊 [RSS](#)

Most Commented on Network World

[A giant radio telescope, a small school and a Wi-Fi problem](#)
11 comments · 3 hours ago

[US Federal Reserve admits to breached system](#)
1 comment · 4 hours ago

[Dell strengthens data center line with OpenFlow support, high-end Ethernet switch](#)
2 comments · 7 hours ago

[Which Linux distro is best? Survey says: Slackware](#)
1 comment · 5 hours ago

[Cisco vs. Juniper: How different are their SDN strategies?](#)
1 comment · 8 hours ago

Network World's Daily Newsletter

Stay up to date with the most important tech news

Sign-up

Network World, Inc 🔊
The Connected Enterprise

About Us
Careers @ IDG
Contact Us
Subscribe to
Network World
Magazine

Newsletter
Subscriptions
Advertise
Reprints & Links
Partnerships
AdChoices

Other IDG Sites

CFOworld
CIO
CITEworld
Computerworld
CSO
DEMO
IDG Connect

IDG Knowledge Hub
IDG TechNetwork
IDG Ventures
InfoWorld
ITwhitepapers
ITworld
JavaWorld

LinuxWorld
MacWorld
Network World
PC World
TechHive
Technology Briefcase