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Greene, T. (2012, October 18). Virtual desktops: User tips from the trenches. Network World - Network World. Retrieved February 7, 2013, from <http://www.networkworld.com/news/2012/101812-virtual-desktops-263500.html>

Virtualization is becoming more popular in the world, expected to experience growing sales to 3 billion-plus by 2015, from 2.3 billion in 2011. This growing field offers users several great potentials to allow them better cost efficiency, lowering energy bills, lowering management costs, offering better security, and providing better efficiency in the work environment. However this new technology has a few major drawbacks including the initial cost, and requires constant tweaking to maintain high performance.

Virtualizations can allow a major reduction in electrical bills due to lowering power usage. Powering one large server where all processing is done drastically reduces energy costs compared to running 300 computers, where each computer processes its own work. Beaufort Memorial Hospital in South Carolina deployed virtual environments, and actually received a rebate for the savings from the local power utility.

However the savings are generally not seen for quite some time, due to the initial costs of implementing a virtualized environment in a business. Often the infrastructure of the business’ network must be upgraded in order to handle the increased network traffic. Ed Ricks, vice president of information systems and CIO at the hospital recommended that anyone interested in implementing a virtualized environment should allow their vendors to evaluate and upgrade their networks for the traffic, offering valuable knowledge from their past experiences.

After the upgrades are done, Ricks said he quickly began seeing an improvement in productivity in his network’s users. The virtualized computers offered much more portable information, allowing workers to quickly change their work stations. Ricks had implemented a ‘badge swipe’ method in his hospital. This new method allowed for personal desktops for each user, instead of a machine in the ward containing all information. This solution allowed users to quickly swipe a badge and load their applications and files from the server, instead of having to log in and out of terminals all day, saving time when done 40 or more times a day.

In addition to increasing the productivity of the users by saving time, it also allows users to fix their own problems. Network administrators can release tweaked and updated versions of the virtualization to users, while keeping the old versions accessible as well. This allows users to implement the updated versions, however if a problem is found with the new security settings, users can load a previous version of the environment until the problem is resolved.

Finally, the use of virtualization can provide better security in a business environment. This technology allows all data to be stored in a single location, instead of spread across a building, offering additional targets for hackers and malware. In addition, maintaining security on a single server is much less complicated than trying to maintain it across 300 or more computers which would usually have slightly different security settings, simply due to the scale of the infrastructure.

I personally believe virtualization to be a very efficient tool with enough benefits to grow exponentially in the future. While virtualization maybe tricky when first implemented and require a constant upkeep to insure performance, the savings defiantly encourage businesses to move in this direction. As well, I defiantly enjoy the idea of a future job’s network having the capabilities to load a work environment on my personal laptop. As well, the portability offered by virtualization even encourages my personal home use. I find the capability to run a virtualization on my laptop, then load it to a more powerful home server, or the ability to have several computers in a home, and simply change which system my environment is running on to be a very convent tool. I will defiantly be keeping an eye on virtualization as it progresses, and hope to see its use become more popular.

Garret O’Brien did a great job in his review, commenting on how well it had most information from the article included. He suggested that I added more information from the article to my abstract however, while I agree more should be added, I’m not sure where. I read through both my abstract and the article again, and while the article does contain a lot of information, I feel that I did cover all the main points of the article, and adding very much more information would bog down the abstract with minor details. And in response to his question “What kind of virtualization did the hospital use?” in the article they used Client (or desktop) virtualization. It was operated on a remote desktop virtualization, where all desktops are ran in their own environments on a server, meaning the computers that are being used themselves are just a ‘window’ to the virtualization, and input is sent to the server to be processed then is seen on the monitor as it views the server’s environment. Also in response to his question “What kind of virtualization do you think is most useful?” I don’t personally feel that there is a most useful, due to the fact that of the 3 major types of virtualization, they all serve an important role. Server virtualization can be useful to large companies, allowing them to better manage resources, and safe money on hardware. Server virtualization allows them to run multiple servers with only one physical machine. Instead of having to have one server for email, one for web, one for files, a single server can be purchased and a virtualization of different servers can be ran, allowing one server to act many. Client virtualization can be useful for programmers, who need to boot up a local copy of a different operating system, and make sure it’s compatible, while offering a use to large companies who rather buy a single powerful server than buy several hundred computers. Desktop virtualization can also be used for application virtualization, allowing someone the ability to run a potential malicious software program in its own environment, instead of risking their data. Finally storage virtualization can save headaches for IT departments, by allowing them to turn 100 small storage locations into what appears to be one large storage drive.

Devin Leaman also offered valuable feedback, bringing to light some of my grammatical errors, which actually flow smoothly in my sporadic mind. Grammar was changed in the abstract, and farther reviewed. In response to his question “Do you think that virtualization will someday become the standard for corporations and the current method of computing be done away with?” Corporation wise, I do believe that someday virtualization on some level will become the standard, with server and storage virtualization being some of the first types of virtualization to be implemented, then client virtualization will grow farther until it’s the standard as well, due to the savings and ease of manageability in the long run.