Solution Showcase

Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops Work Hand in Hand with Microsoft Windows Virtual Desktop

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Abstract: The integration of Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops with Windows Virtual Desktop is now available through Citrix Workspace services. Organizations can manage Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktop workloads— on-premises or cloud-hosted—from a single location. Existing Citrix customers delivering applications or full VDI architectures to their users should plan to evaluate how hybrid management of Windows Virtual Desktop (VWD) through Citrix can accelerate their cloud goals of securely delivering and managing applications and desktops.

Introduction

With a powerful set of digital workspace technologies designed to extend Windows Virtual Desktop, Citrix has been helping businesses securely deliver applications and desktops for more than 30 years. Users think of Citrix as the go-to brand on which they rely for an enhanced experience—for example, simple workspace login, secure access to business applications, ease of sharing data, intelligent insights and analytics, and collaborating with peers. IT professionals and Citrix administrators across industries have long relied on the Citrix environment to deliver an optimal user experience, secure applications and data, and simplify workspace management.

Citrix and Microsoft, Better Together

With more than half a million joint customers, and a partnership extending back several decades, Citrix and Microsoft have a unique bond. The two leaders have consistently augmented each other's technology, tools, and solutions to help users enhance productivity and stay on task, while helping IT to get the job done. Businesses have been increasingly investigating cloud strategies, which align well with the integration efforts of Citrix and Microsoft. In fact, according to ESG research, 76% of organizations have already adopted multi-cloud,[1] and 76% of organizations are committed to a hybrid cloud strategy[2] in an effort to embrace the "cloud experience" and capture the numerous benefits cloud has to offer.

While the Citrix and Microsoft partnership has flourished, Microsoft has also focused on assisting customers to embrace the benefits of cloud by building and delivering services on Microsoft Azure, enabling organizations to efficiently modernize and transform IT.

Windows Virtual Desktop (WVD), delivered on Azure, is a new Microsoft platform that offers the following:

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[1] Source: ESG Master Survey Results, *2019 Technology Spending Intentions Survey,* March 2019.
[2] Source: ESG Master Survey Results, *Hybrid Cloud Trends*, May 2019.

- **Multi-session desktops**. Previously available to only remote desktop services (RDS) customers, the WVD platform now provides a multi-session, Windows 10 virtualized desktop experience, which is highly scalable and always up to date. Available on any device, WVD enhances user experience and assures application compatibility.

- **Windows 7 extended security updates on Azure**. Microsoft is offering three additional years of extended security updates to Windows 7 virtual machines hosted on Windows Virtual Desktop.

- **New Office 365 virtualization enhancements**. As part of Microsoft's FSLogix acquisition, Microsoft administrators will be able to simplify deployments and enhance virtualization ROI, all while improving the overall virtualized Office 365 experience.

While Windows Virtual Desktop offers its own management service, Microsoft has empowered trusted partners (such as Citrix) to augment WVD with their own unique capabilities. So while there may have been some confusion around WVD competing with Citrix, this is not the case. WVD is ultimately a new cloud consumption option that can be managed and maintained by comprehensive service offerings from Citrix, depending on the needs of the organization.

Opportunities Abound

For existing Citrix customers, WVD is a new way to expand into the Azure cloud, and at the same time preserve on-premises investments. Using the Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops service, customers are able to manage these workloads in hybrid fashion using the familiar Citrix tools they know, while taking advantage of new capabilities such as cloud capacity bursting as data center limits are reached.

New customers can use all of the Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktop capabilities (think Citrix high-definition user experience HDX technology, image and application management, and capacity/power management, among others). These capabilities build on top of the easy-to-consume WVD format, leveraging the Azure cloud for unlimited capacity and scale. In addition, organizations can more effectively tackle the challenges of connecting a cloud environment to business-critical, on-premises resources with WAN optimization from Citrix to ensure an optimized end-user experience.

Integrating On-premises Workspaces and Windows Virtual Desktop

Microsoft's management service for Windows Virtual Desktop does not offer management operations services for on-premises workloads, so how will organizations integrate on-premises workspaces and Windows Virtual Desktop? Since workspaces may be delivered and consumed both on-premises and in Azure, IT professionals will need to consider a hybrid management approach (think Citrix). Citrix can effectively maintain security, operations, and an optimal end-user experience in hybrid mode.

Benefits of Citrix Workspace for Windows Virtual Desktop

Citrix Workspace offers enterprise-class management and administration benefits for Windows Virtual Desktop including:

- **Full hybrid management** of on-premises and Azure-hosted deployments.

- **Automatic scaling and on-demand provisioning**. Cloud workloads are always available—without costly overprovisioning expenses.

- **Improved login speeds and profile management**. User experience is enhanced by means of efficient handling and automatic consolidation of profile data.

- **Flexible image management**. Via layering, IT is able to spend less time patching and updating images, while providing end-users with a persistent, always up-to-date desktop.

- **Optimized performance through Workspace Environment Management.** Citrix automatically monitors Windows Virtual Desktop resource utilization, dynamically adjusting the environment based on user profiles, system policies, and resource consumption—reducing cloud spending and enhancing the user experience.

- **Accelerated branch and remote connectivity via Azure Virtual WAN optimization**. Users gain an improved performance experience when using Office 365, virtual desktops, or connecting from branch office locations.

- **Real-time, end-to-end visibility into the environment**. Administrators have the ability to monitor the entire Citrix and Windows Virtual Desktop deployment, scanning for performance issues or evaluating security threats in real time.

In collaboration with Microsoft, Citrix also offers a DaaS (desktop-as-a-service) solution for businesses that require desktops on demand with a pay-per-usage economic consumption model. Whether businesses are new to Windows Virtual Desktop, or looking to leverage this new WVD entitlement in their Microsoft 365 (M365) subscription, Citrix Managed Desktop removes the guesswork—enabling them to get up and running with an Azure-hosted virtual desktop in minutes.

Working together, Citrix assists Microsoft by:

- Accelerating Windows 10 adoption in the enterprise.

- Offering an easy way to transition on-premises workloads to Azure with simplified tools and hybrid deployment management.

- Enhancing user experience with Microsoft Teams and Office 365.

Windows Virtual Desktop presents Citrix and Microsoft with new opportunities for existing and new Citrix customers to consider the relevance of the cloud to their short- and long-term initiatives. As these opportunities unfold, Citrix will need to guide existing customers down a path that shows:

- Economic value and return on a WVD investment.

- Favorable scale, performance, and user experience with WVD.

- Simplified and more secure means to monitor and manage user workspaces.

WVD has the potential to be a key onboarding service for partners, which can help their customers embrace the benefits of cloud. As such, Citrix go-to-market partners will need to determine new ways to increase customer value with WVD, ideally discovering net-new opportunities around cloud transition.

The Bigger Truth

With the integration of Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops with Windows Virtual Desktop through Citrix Workspace services, IT professionals can now manage Citrix virtual apps and desktop workloads—on-premises or cloud-hosted—from a single location. Citrix is invested in delivering apps and desktops on Azure, and organizations can bring their own Azure subscriptions, or purchase Azure directly from Citrix to take advantage of the new WVD entitlements.

The new Citrix Managed Desktop offering also adds new options such as an easy-to-deploy DaaS solution, providing streamlined management and the benefits of Citrix HDX technology, which offers a high-definition user experience.

Existing Citrix customers delivering applications, or full VDI architectures, to their users should plan to evaluate how hybrid management of Windows Virtual Desktop through Citrix can accelerate their cloud goals of securely delivering and managing applications and desktops.

Expect to see businesses that have strategic cloud initiatives with Azure, aging IT infrastructure supporting VDI, and teams that have proven out the value of DaaS to be some of the first movers in the market. WVD is also likely to create a wake in the market that will challenge the business model of some early stage companies delivering DaaS and open the door for new opportunities with strategic partners like Citrix.

WVD is going to be valuable for Citrix customers, helping them expand the ways in which applications and desktops are securely delivered and managed. At present, there's an opportunity to scale within the organization, and look at existing use cases, as well as to explore new use cases that enhance how employees work, how partners interact with businesses, and how independent software vendors (ISVs) deliver software. Citrix has opened up a wide range of opportunities for organizations to win big, helping to enhance the ways people work and collaborate—and providing an optimal experience powered by WVD.

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