Realtime publishers

Maximizing Your Desktop and Application Virtualization Implementation

The Essentials Series

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Copyright Statement

Using Hosted Applications with Desktop Virtualization

Companies of all sizes have realized the benefits of desktop virtualization, facilitating its rapid adoption. Whether you are one of the enterprises who have already adopted desktop virtualization or you are about to be, you must ensure proper implementation in order to benefit from all the latest innovations. Smart companies are leveraging innovations such as intelligent image management, performance management tools specifically designed for VDI, and access to remote applications for end users. Recently, desktop as a service (DaaS) has entered the picture giving cause for companies to consider when and where to take advantage of it. To make the right choice for your company, you need to be educated about the latest innovations in desktop and application management and delivery.

The State of Desktop Virtualization

A growing percentage of enterprises today have virtualized end user desktops by using VDI technologies. With VDI, typically each user has his or her own virtual machine and operating system (OS—which may be connected to a master image), end user profiles are usually centralized on a file share, and applications may be locally installed or thinly provisioned. The end user accesses this virtual desktop machine, running on a data center server, using a high-performance protocol over a LAN, WAN, or even securely through the Internet.

Alternatively, many enterprises are using hosted application technologies. In some cases, a user's entire desktop is hosted or remoted in a shared session environment. In other cases, just their applications are hosted and accessed over the network. Many of these companies, over time, are and will continue to make the move to VDI while continuing to leverage session virtualization and hosted applications. There are also a segment of users who—because of their remote location or mobile work requirements—need physical computers (desktop or laptop) to do their jobs. These users have only periodic network access or slow network access, making a local image a requirement on their devices.

Notably, there is no single general solution that all enterprises are immediately moving to; there will continue to be this variety of desktop/application access methods for the foreseeable future. As a result, enterprises need choice and flexibility when it comes to implementing and delivering desktops and applications to end users.

Introduction to Hosted Applications

For those not familiar with hosted applications, a brief overview is needed: Hosted applications work by installing a single instance of an application on a server. That application instance is installed in such a way that it can be run by multiple users with application and data preferences for each user going to a separate location. With the applications installed properly, they can then be published, using Microsoft's Remote Desktop Session Host (RDSH) with Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP), Remote Desktop Session Host with PCoIP from VMware, or Citrix XenApp with the session virtualization option and HDX. End user devices can be desktops, laptops, or tablet devices that run a compatible remote desktop and application client.

Benefits of Hosted Applications

If we compare applications installed locally in each VDI virtual machine (VM), physical desktop, or even virtualized application installations, hosted applications have a number of benefits:

- Specific hosted applications can be consolidated into a single server (or cluster of servers) that runs only that application for every user employing it
- Hosted applications, when consolidated into a single server/cluster can be maintained and upgraded as needed from a single point
- Application owners can be responsible for a particular hosted application, which can be maintained without any effect on other applications
- Adding and removing an application from an end user desktop, when hosted, is as easy as adding or removing icons from a Windows desktop
- Users may want to access an application directly without having to launch a full virtual desktop

How Hosted Applications Work with Desktop Virtualization

Today, enterprises need the flexibility to access applications through a variety of methods. Although desktop virtualization is where many companies are moving, there are still companies that have large remote desktop session host environments. To give desktop virtualization users the ultimate flexibility, modern desktop virtualization solutions should allow users to access hosted applications along side local VDI applications. When integrated properly with desktop virtualization solutions, these hosted applications should:

- Have the same look and feel as local applications
- Have access to the local client device OS, including the ability to be in the task bar/dock
- Have the ability to work in shortcuts and application launchers
- Have start menu integration
- Have copy/paste integration

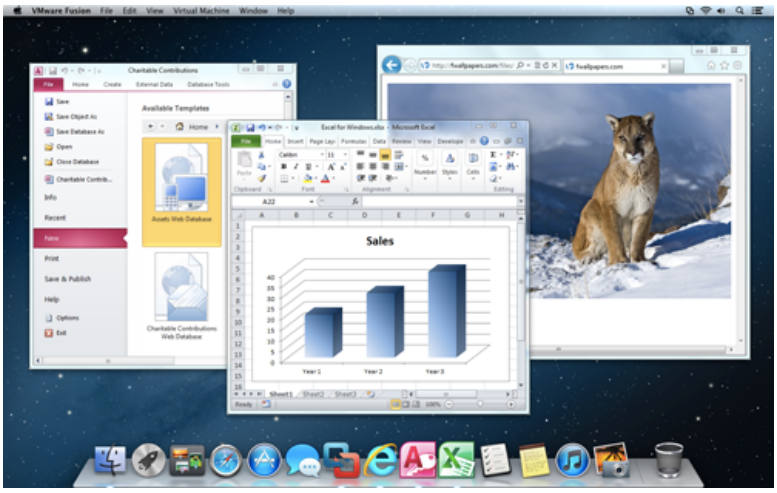

Figure 1.1: Remote applications seamlessly integrated.

Key Considerations in Hosted Application Implementation

When it comes to implementing hosted applications in the enterprise, there are key considerations to keep in mind. First, some applications are not compatible with being shared as a remote desktop session–remote application. Compatibility depends on how the application stores configuration and user customizations. Thus, not all applications will function as remote desktop session applications.

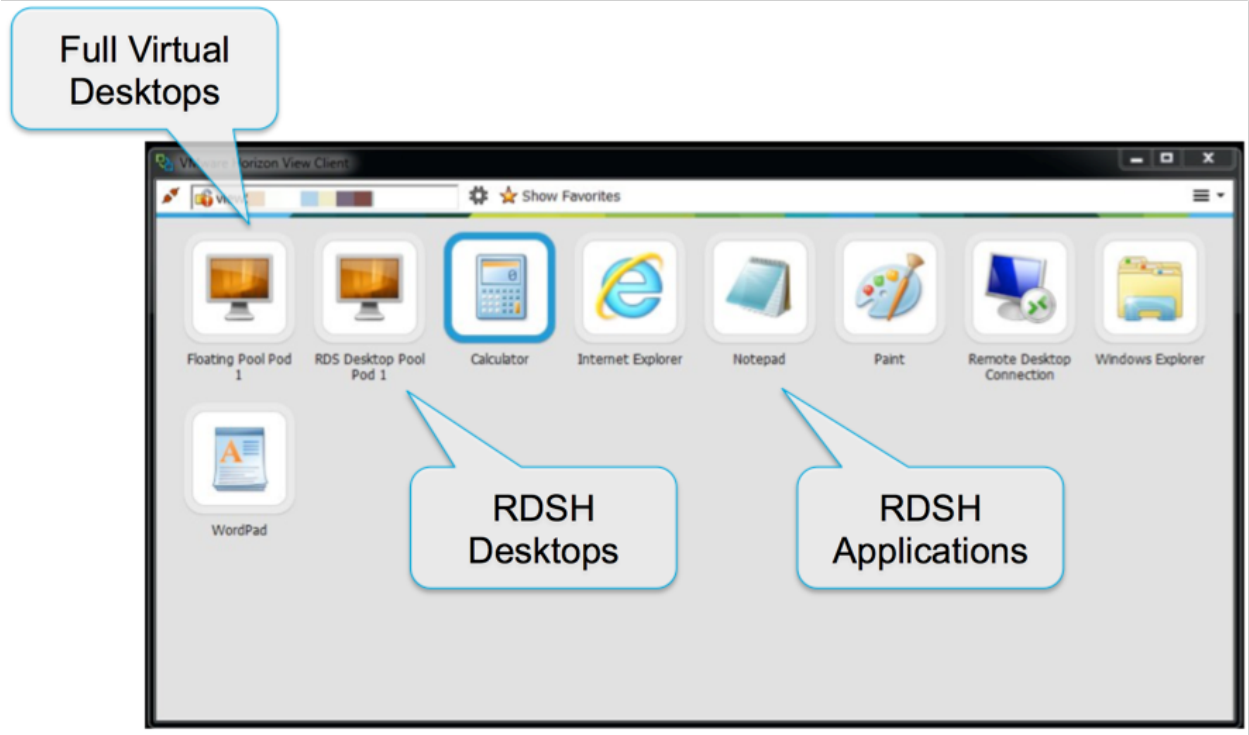

Figure 1.2: Full virtual desktops available alongside RDS hosted applications.

Second, different companies will have different use cases and that will drive how they implement hosted applications. Depending on the use cases, desktop virtualization may not be used but hosted or published applications will. For example, users who travel and spend much of their time offline won't be able to use hosted applications. Those users will likely employ local Windows OSs with layered single image management and/or virtualized applications. Users who are remote but have network access may use just a handful of hosted applications. In addition, there may be bring your own device (BYOD) users who just need access to run a few hosted applications.

Summary

With insight into the latest developments in desktop and application management, you can help your company realize the ideal setup for your environment. New desktop and application virtualization solutions are providing administrators the option to support more use cases with both VDI and hosted applications easily and effectively, through a single unified interface.