Transform and Modernise your Business with Virtual Desktop Solutions

Empower IT to Transform the Workplace

cmi The business IT experts

Microsoft Solutions Partner

Modern Work

The Rise of Remote Work

The evolution of technology has enabled new, previously unprecedented working practices to evolve. Organisations have been liberated from their offices and employees are no longer tied to their desks. No longer merely a response to 'unprecedented circumstances', remote and hybrid working models have now become the norm – supported by the rapid rise of the Cloud.

92% of organisations are now hosting at least some of their IT environment in the Cloud. The Cloud offers employees the opportunity to connect from almost anywhere, allowing businesses to introduce more flexible working structures. As these statistics demonstrate, employees are more than ready to adopt remote working models.

We have created a comprehensive guide to help you modernise your user devices effectively with virtual desktop solutions. We will explore:

- What a virtual desktop is
- Virtual desktop business use cases
- The rise of virtualisation
- The business benefits of virtual desktops
- Migrating, deployment and management
- And much, much more

As a result, in order to remain competitive as a business, you need to equip your employees with the right tools and solutions for remote working. While many businesses have already begun harnessing the potential of the Cloud and virtualising their servers, in order to truly empower your employees, optimise your operations and unlock new opportunities, you need to modernise your user devices with virtual desktop solutions from CMI.

52% of employees are considering going hybrid or remote in the year ahead.

80% of employees say they are just as or more productive since going remote or hybrid.

38% of hybrid employees would change jobs in order to work remotely.

78% of those who worked from home in some capacity said that being able to do so gave them an improved work-life balance.

[Sources: Microsoft and Office for National Statistics]

What is a Virtual Desktop?

A virtual desktop is a virtualised computer which resides in the Cloud and is operated via the Internet. Every feature of a typical computer, including the operating system, processing power, memory, storage and network interface, can be accessed through the Cloud from any compatible device. Essentially, a virtual desktop allows you to access your unique desktop environment from anywhere, at any time, over the Internet.

Each virtual desktop runs on a physical host machine. As multiple virtual desktops can run on a single host machine, you can easily create a scalable virtual desktop infrastructure. A virtual desktop infrastructure is a network of virtual computers operated from a central control panel.

Microsoft offer two key virtual desktop solutions, Azure Virtual Desktop and Windows 365. Which solution you should use depends on the specific business challenges you are trying to overcome. Windows 365 is optimised for simplicity, while Azure Virtual Desktop is optimised for flexibility.

"Why Do I Need a Virtual Desktop?" The Business Use Cases

The desktops might be virtual, but the benefits your business will see are very real. By modernising your user devices, your business can make major infrastructural changes efficiently and easily and your employees will see day-to-day benefits that will improve their overall workplace experience.

Security and regulation	Flexible workforce	Specialised workloads
• Helps businesses in highly regulated and data sensitive industries remain compliant • Adhere to data regulations, including ISO 27002, 27018, and 27701, plus PCI and HIPAA • Ideal for financial services, healthcare and government	• Quickly deploy and scale virtual desktops up or down to can respond to changes in your business • Support mergers, acquisitions, short-term employees, contractor and partner access, BYOD and mobile, call- centres and branch workers	• Leverage virtual desktops for legacy applications, design and engineering • Carry out software development and testing as needed

The Rise of Virtualisation

In the past few years, Cloud adoption has soared and shows no signs of slowing down.

31% of organisations expect to run 75% of their workloads in the Cloud by 2023.	**62% of IT executives surveyed stated that they would migrate workloads to the Cloud for more flexibility and scalability, while 47% cited elastic resource provisioning as a primary driver.**	**Cloud spending is estimated to reach nearly $600 billion in 2023.**

[Sources: Cloud Zero]

Alongside greater flexibility, there are several other benefits that have contributed to the increase in Cloud adoption:

Scalability	Efficiency	Reliability
The Cloud is extremely elastic and scalable, making it ideal for businesses that want to grow. Via the Cloud, you can scale resources such as computing power, storage and bandwidth up or down according to your need.	Cloud computing allows high volumes of computing resources to be provisioned efficiently. This efficiency reduces the pressure of capacity planning and helps to improve business flexibility.	The Cloud has impressive data backup and disaster recovery capabilities which helps to improve business continuity and minimise downtime. 20% of Cloud users state that disaster recovery takes less than four hours in comparison to only 9% of non-cloud users.

The Benefits of Virtual Desktop Solutions

Virtual desktops harness the power of the Cloud to bring extremely tangible benefits across your business.

Enhanced Security

Virtual desktops from Microsoft help to prevent viruses or malware from infecting your network with advanced anti-virus and malware protection software, such as Microsoft Defender. Plus, with Azure Virtual Desktop, you benefit from Azure's sophisticated security functions, including reduced attack surfaces, granular controls and isolated user sessions.

Backup

Virtual desktops make regular copies of their operations history, meaning data is easily retrievable in the event of a disaster and you are less likely to lose access to valuable files.

Savings

Minimise the cost of managing on-premises infrastructure. Plus, leverage existing Microsoft licenses and run multiple virtual desktops on the same hardware to reduce overheads.

Simplified Management

Deploy and scale efficiently and simplify the ongoing provisioning, access and management of your business' applications and data.

Sustainability

As climate change becomes a more pressing issue, many businesses are looking to implement more sustainable practices. While end-user computing is a significant contributor to carbon emissions, the Microsoft Cloud is different. Adopting Microsoft Cloud solutions can actually help to reduce your carbon footprint.

Not only has Microsoft Azure been carbon neutral since 2012, but switching to Microsoft Azure from an on-premises environment could increase energy efficiency by up to 93% and decrease carbon emissions by up to 98%. Therefore, by migrating to Azure Virtual Desktop you can improve your overall business sustainability.

Best User Experience

Microsoft's virtual desktops allow you to connect from any device of your choice and receive a like-local Microsoft Windows experience. With features such as extensive support for devices, enhanced protocol, fast user profiles, uncompromised Office 365 email and calendar performance and the best possible conferencing and media experience, virtual desktops offer a superior user experience.

Migrate, Deploy and Manage: Your Ongoing Journey to the Cloud

When migrating to the Cloud or implementing new virtual desktop solutions, you need to be mindful of several key considerations, including security, data integrity, access control and maintaining compliance. A seamless and secure migration cannot be achieved without a clear strategy and careful planning. You will need to review your current IT environment and assets and carry out a test migration before you can begin your permanent switch.

Without support, this can feel like a daunting task. But why should your business modernisation be hindered? Partnering with Cloud specialists, like those at CMI, can help to ease the stress of your migration and ensure that it is carried out strategically and effectively. We will work closely with your team to understand your specific business requirements and which virtual desktop solution is most appropriate. Additionally, we will provide ongoing support for the configuration, deployment and continual management of your virtual desktop environment, ensuring that your business never has to slow down.

Take the First Step Towards Business Modernisation

The future of working is now. Are you ready to embrace it? At CMI, we have the specialist Cloud expertise needed to help you modernise your user devices and drive success for your virtual workplace.

We use our unique Impact360 framework to ensure that your virtual workplace is established seamlessly, effectively and in line with your overall business goals.

Explore our additional resources today to find out how our virtual desktop solutions could transform your business operations.

Get in touch

📍 Belfast / London / Thames Valley

📞 0800 023 2696 / +44 (0)28 9073 5656

✉️ hellocmi@newcmi.com

Begin your modernisation journey

We hold discovery sessions with your board and senior leadership to help understand your goals and identify your key impact metrics.

We carry out an employee technology survey to uncover how IT is impacting your employees' ability to work efficiently and effectively.

We identify the gaps between your actual technology usage and the benefits that new virtual desktop investments could bring.

We set specific baselines from which to measure the positive impact our virtual desktop solution is having towards achieving your overall business goals.