The future of the desktop is in the cloud.

5 top reasons for enterprises to consider cloud desktops as a service.

Workspot.

Microsoft Azure

INTRODUCTION

Legacy desktop provisioning has run its course

The public cloud changes everything. Are you ready?

Provisioning and managing physical PCs is painful – especially for distributed organizations. Procurement, provisioning, and the logistics of shipping are costly and time-consuming – and then there's the security risk of enterprise data floating around on laptops. This is the reason many companies moved to virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) in the first place. However, legacy on-premises VDI can still constrain your agility. It's complex, hard to scale beyond one location, and it requires specialized skill sets to run and troubleshoot.

IT organizations have essentially been held hostage by their desktop infrastructure and the need to "keep the lights on." Infrastructure management tasks have become a primary job that IT specialists are reluctant to leave.

The public cloud offers a fundamentally new, global infrastructure that organizations can use to outsource traditional datacenter-management functions, freeing IT personnel to contribute in more strategic ways specifically aimed at business growth. Furthermore, moving desktop workloads onto public cloud infrastructure can be a high-return way to better address end-user computing. The opportunity is to improve the overall user experience and boost productivity while better securing information assets. But there are multiple approaches to cloud desktops available—from "do-it-yourself" (DIY) VDI tools to software as a service (SaaS) platforms. IT experts need to understand the capabilities of each when choosing the best solutions for their organizations.

Questions to consider as you evaluate cloud desktops:

- What type of desktops do your users need? Persistent? Non-persistent? Multi-user? A mix?
- Do you have users in multiple locations around the globe? If so, can the cloud desktop solution easily scale horizontally across regions?
- Is the cloud desktop solution architected for zero-trust security?
- Does the cloud desktop solution help you meet your recovery time objectives in a disaster?
- Do you need customized desktops that incorporate your existing corporate images, applications, security stack, and processes?
- Can the cloud desktop solution achieve performance that is as good as or better than a physical PC?
- Who is responsible for the cloud desktop service level agreement (SLA)?
- Is cost variability a concern? Does the cloud desktop solution offer flat, predictable pricing?

These are some of the primary considerations for IT leaders looking to the cloud to alleviate provisioning and management challenges of physical PCs and legacy virtual desktops. How organizations weight requirements will differ based on their use cases, but with the ability of cloud desktops to solve desktop management pain and deliver new levels of business agility, it's clear that enterprise use cases for cloud desktops are expanding. In fact, Gartner predicts that desktop as a service (DaaS) worldwide revenue will grow at a CAGR of 58.8% between 2017 and 2023.[1] This e-book explores how Workspot cloud desktops on Microsoft Azure address the considerations above, and the many new use cases the joint platform can support.

[1] "Forecast Analysis: Desktop as a Service Worldwide," Gartner Report,October 15, 2019.

5 top ways cloud desktop as a service can improve and simplify end-user computing

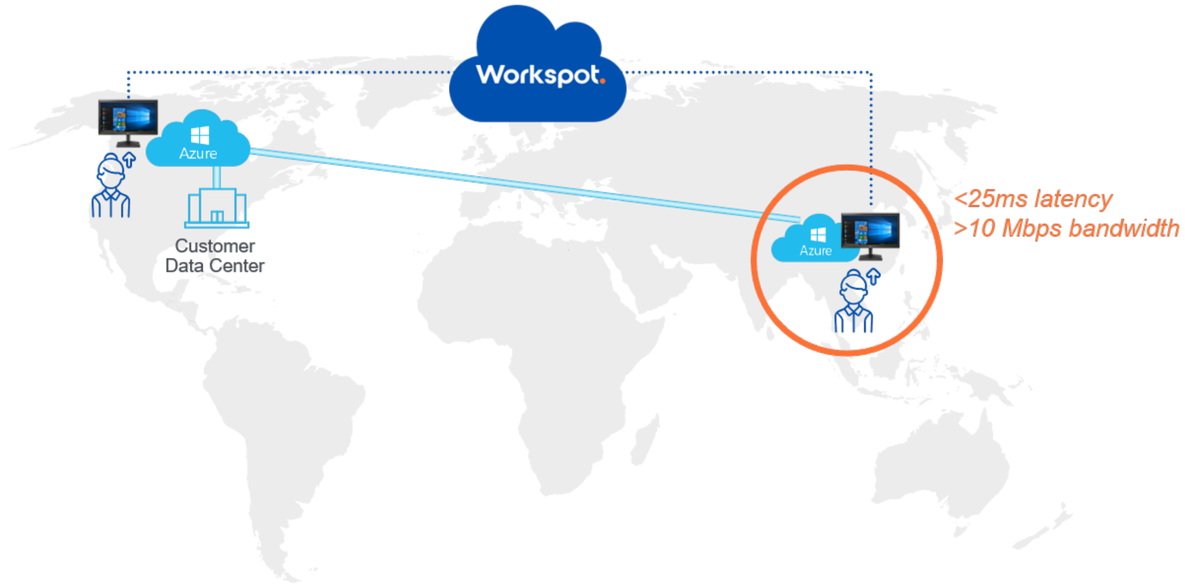
Whether you're still managing physical PCs or considering on-prem VDI systems, Workspot cloud desktops on Microsoft Azure can open the door to new use cases, offering simplicity, performance, and scale that is unprecedented. Workspot is a SaaS platform that runs on Microsoft Azure and allows IT organizations to provision virtual cloud desktops in any Azure region, in minutes. IT managers access the Workspot Control console, which gives them web-based access to their entire cloud desktop infrastructure. Workspot's intelligent client can easily be deployed on a variety of endpoint operating systems, including Windows, Android, iOS, and more, giving end users access to their cloud desktop from any device. Here are the top ways Workspot cloud desktops on Azure can make life easier for IT.

1. Better business agility—virtual desktops in minutes, not months

A growing business needs employees, and employees need access to corporate applications and systems to do their jobs. Most enterprises have remote employees and contractors all over the globe. With physical PCs, it can take IT weeks to source, provision, and distribute desktops. That means it can be weeks before users achieve full productivity on their new systems, and that is a substantial cost to the business. Even greater costs – both for equipment and end-user downtime—accrue during hardware refresh cycles, or when equipment fails. If you're considering on-prem VDI, it can take months and substantial investment in both hardware and IT specialists before you have a system to support your first end user. Plus, when business requirements change, it's difficult and time-consuming to scale up to meet those needs on-demand. These traditional approaches to end-user computing actually limit agility at a time when enterprises need to be more nimble than ever. All of these examples can cost you money. For instance, highly valuable developers are expensive, and when they sit idle waiting for IT to distribute desktops, the cost to the business adds up fast.

The Workspot cloud desktop platform on Azure provides a turnkey service to deliver fully custom desktops to any user, anywhere in the world, allowing you to have new employees and contractors productive in minutes or hours, not months—even in a bring-your-own-device culture. This gives you the ability to respond to changing business needs by quickly spinning up cloud desktops on-demand when and where they are needed.

Because Workspot leverages Azure's evergreen, enterprise-class hardware in cloud regions globally, IT organizations now have the flexibility to provide end users with less costly endpoints, while giving them the power to access their fully provisioned cloud desktops from anywhere.



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2. Engineered for your enterprise

Some cloud desktop solutions provide a "Windows 10-like" experience – in other words, a server-based, shared, hosted desktop – which may work fine for a small- to medium-size business. However, many of the applications that enterprise-scale businesses require may not work properly. Workspot's turnkey cloud desktop platform makes it possible for your IT team to deliver fully customized Windows 10 desktops using your corporate image, your security stack, and your authentication tools, and it works with your existing IT processes as well. Even if your team is new to Microsoft Azure, they don't have to become Azure experts to be successful; Workspot's customer success team will work with you to optimize the system and ensure rapid time to value.

Workspot's customer success and product teams work with you to ensure fast time to value and continuous optimization.

Workspot's powerful cloud-native platform uniquely supports:

Horizontal scalability across all Azure regions, making it possible for IT to provision and manage Windows 10 desktops in any region from a single management console. So, an IT admin in California can provision 20 desktops in India, 15 in New York, 50 in Singapore, and anywhere else they are needed – in minutes.

Integration with IT service management (ITSM) automation. Imagine that you've hired a new software developer in India. Using Workspot's ServiceNow integration, the user simply submits a request for a desktop through your existing process, her manager approves the request, and in less than an hour, she is logging into her fully provisioned cloud desktop or cloud workstation via a low-cost tablet connected to dual monitors at her desk.

A powerful network operations center (NOC), managed by Workspot, captures data about desktop operations, such as log-in attempts, user locations, and more, which can be exported by IT to data analysis tools like Splunk. Further, the NOC is used by our operations team to proactively alert customers about network issues, user log-in problems, and many additional criteria before they result in user downtime. The NOC is just one element of the innovation that supports Workspot's ability to deliver a 99.95% desktop SLA.

3. Exceptional performance to power new use cases

Virtual desktops have developed a reputation for poor performance. Sometimes this occurs because the system is being run from a datacenter in a single location, with end users located many thousands of miles away, which results in latency. In other cases, poor performance is caused by the challenges of over-provisioning too many users on a shared hardware infrastructure. For call-center employees working with basic applications, this might be OK, but for knowledge workers or power users who need access to high-performance compute, any noticeable latency can be unacceptable.

Workspot's patent-pending Desktop Control Fabric™ platform makes it possible for IT to provision each user's cloud desktop in the Azure region closest to them, thus reducing latency and ensuring unparalleled performance. Many Workspot customers have further supercharged their cloud desktops by placing shared data—like software code bases or CAD/CAM design files—in the cloud as well. With Azure's high-speed backbone, many Workspot users have reported performance that's even faster than their physical GPU workstations!

This new level of performance enables Workspot customers to solve business challenges that were previously not well supported:

- Securely supporting remote software developers while maintaining control over intellectual property.
- Reducing time to process drone data from days to hours, resulting in faster business growth.
- Improving collaboration between teams by centralizing large files and data sets in Azure, and providing fast access with Workspot cloud desktops over Azure's high-speed backbone.

These use cases and many others that require high-performance computing can now be successfully addressed. When power users love the performance, they are more productive, which creates a competitive edge for the business.

4. Azure leveraged to reduce desktop TCO by 30%

Most enterprises have a combination of end-user computing solutions to address different business needs. These include traditional VDI, laptops for mobile knowledge workers, desktops, workstations for power users, and so on. Managing this diverse infrastructure requires sophisticated, expensive skill sets and a large IT organization.

Innovative IT organizations recognize that moving infrastructure to the cloud can reduce capital expense and energy costs as well as the operational expenses associated with the human resources required to maintain on-prem datacenters. Further, because all compute is handled in the cloud, IT can provision lower cost endpoints, such as a Microsoft Surface Go, without impacting user productivity. In fact, users now gain the flexibility to work from anywhere with as good or superior performance, which typically results in improved employee satisfaction and higher productivity.

In conjunction with Workspot customer and industry analyst data, a detailed analysis of the costs associated with a well-managed desktop—whether physical PCs or legacy VDI desktops—has been developed, and it demonstrates that organizations can reduce desktop TCO by 30%—often by more—with Workspot on Azure. The soft benefits of improved productivity, business agility, and more can also be considered in addition to this hard-cost analysis.

5. Improved security and compliance

Ensuring secure access to corporate applications and resources for remote workers, contractors, or temporary employees is challenging for many distributed enterprises. A single unpatched PC can open up your organization to serious security breaches. Workspot on Azure centralizes desktops in the cloud so they are easily managed and patched, while the secure Workspot client turns each physical endpoint into a zero-trust, stateless device. Corporate data no longer resides on employee laptops or computers, but stays safe in the cloud. Unlike other cloud desktop solutions, Workspot's innovative architecture separates the control plane from the data plane, and that means your application data never flows through Workspot Control.

Because it is built on the Azure cloud, you benefit from Azure's $1B investment in security. Microsoft employs more than 3,500 security experts completely dedicated to Azure data security and privacy. It's no wonder that 95% of Fortune 500 companies trust Azure's secure platform—it has the most comprehensive compliance portfolio of any cloud provider, with over 70 compliance certifications.

Together, Workspot and Azure offer a cloud desktop platform with the most comprehensive security, so IT leaders and CISOs can be confident that by choosing this joint solution they have augmented their overall security posture.

Separation of control plane from data plane: Why architecture matters

Legacy VDI systems and even cloud-based platforms like Amazon WorkSpaces comingle elements of the control plane (the services used to provision the virtual desktop) with the data plane (which includes the gateway and customer data). This makes for a "noisy neighbors" situation. If the control and data planes are integrated into a single domain, all user data (all AWS customers in a given region, for example) must travel through shared gateways, which has security implications, and supporting corporate images and applications will require separate infrastructure.

From the outset, Workspot made a fundamental design decision to separate the control plane from the data plane, which results in unmatched security plus other benefits:

Global scale: Workspot Control – the management console used to provision and monitor desktops – is able to "see" every desktop in every region in Azure without replication of infrastructure, which simplifies provisioning, monitoring, and reporting.

Reduced latency: Workspot places the gateway in the customer domain, so users gain direct access to their cloud desktops.

Better security: Because data doesn't flow through the control plane, Workspot can never see your data.

A 99.95% desktop SLA: Even if Workspot Control (our single pane of glass for management, control, and monitoring) is down for any reason, users can still access their desktops.

CASE STUDY: FROM MONTHS TO DAYS

Southland Industries

Company:

At $1 billion+ in revenue and growing, Southland is one of the largest mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) companies in the nation.

Challenge:

With 17 locations handling massive and growing amounts of CAD and BIM data, Southland Industries had a choice: invest more in datacenter infrastructure or completely change their approach.

Solution:

They chose Workspot cloud workstations and desktops on Azure to:

- Replace physical GPU workstations with cloud GPU workstations.
- Introduce cloud workstations into joint venture projects—across partner firms—for simplicity and scalability.
- Replicate cloud workstations in alternative Azure regions for disaster recovery.

Results:

Three months into the rollout, Southland had 200 “very demanding” users up and running on Workspot’s solution with:

- Complete cloud desktop and workstation setup in hours.
- “Anywhere productivity” with outstanding performance.
- Collaboration in real time on complex designs, which boosted productivity, accelerated project deliverables, and reduced errors and rework costs.
- Ability to hire talent in any geography, and instant and cost-effective onboarding of new hires.
- Rapid response to changing business and project dynamics.
- A comprehensive backup, disaster recovery, and business continuity platform.

Following the success of this initial rollout, the firm is “all-in” on cloud desktops and workstations and is adding hundreds more CAD and BIM experts, as well as task and knowledge workers, to Workspot.

The GET model

Finding out if cloud desktops can improve your performance is simple. Ask your vendors these questions to see if they're meeting all your users' unique requirements so you can deliver the best employee experience and achieve maximum business agility.

G

Global deployment

Can you deploy desktops within 25MS latency of your users? GET performance that is often better than a PC.

E

Enterprise customizability

Can you integrate with custom tools, security, and network policies? GET custom images, custom MFA, custom tools, custom security policies, and custom networking policies.

T

Turnkey and on-demand SaaS

Do you get a turnkey cloud system for delivering Windows 10 desktops? GET fast time to value, industry-leading cloud desktop SLA, flat-rate subscription pricing.

Schedule a **free assessment** to determine whether Workspot cloud desktops on Microsoft Azure are a good fit for your organization.

Learn more

Workspot.

Microsoft Azure