

VDI and Cloud-Based Videoconferencing – Emerging Possibilities

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2010 will mark the end of an extraordinary decade for enterprise communications that will be remembered for significant leaps in collaboration technologies, including advances in social media, mobility and video. When it comes to adoption of enterprise videoconferencing, great strides are being made – all the way from desktop to telepresence. There will be a proliferation of video over the next few years, and that will include desktop and mobile users.

As demand for videoconferencing gains momentum, internal IT departments will not have the capabilities to run the application in-house. This was not the case until now because videoconferencing was restricted to a limited number of users in the organization. It is logical to expect that, in many cases, cloud-based videoconferencing services are going to be a preferred form of deployment. Additionally, with the advancements being made in virtual desktop infrastructures (VDI), many businesses will move desktop videoconferencing computing into the cloud to achieve better scalability and application performance.

Desktop virtualization makes it possible to centralize control, simplify management, improve security and build better business continuity. There are inherent operational, environmental and business cost savings in VDI solutions. However, delivering multimedia communications in a VDI environment can present challenges as real-time video and audio conferencing can overburden networks, leading to limited scalability and poor performance. Those issues are being addressed by the new generation of VDI solutions that are optimized for real-time video and audio conferencing transmission. Solutions such as HP's thin clients, along with Logitech HD Webcam and the Avistar C3 Integrator solution, are now offering businesses a videoconferencing solution that is cost-effective and designed to run within the VDI environment. At the same time, these solutions are leveraging the customers' existing investments in room-based videoconferencing by being fully interoperable with those assets.

VDI solutions for cloud-based desktop videoconferencing offer businesses resiliency, flexibility and ease of management. Businesses can now choose from multiple deployment models to find the best fit for their needs and resources: While some users will want to permanently host desktop videoconferencing in the public cloud with a hosting provider, others may want these applications to be in a private cloud, leveraging an internal server deployment. Still some other businesses will see value in a hybrid solution. In a hybrid solution, the internal IT resources running the applications on a private cloud can combine elements of subscription-based applications delivered through the public cloud. Such implementations can leverage internal resources with the scalability and flexibility of the public cloud. Cloud-based videoconferencing will make it possible for a VDI deployment to have flexible provisioning during times of peak usage by dynamically tapping into the public cloud-based servers.

While VDI and cloud-based videoconferencing are relatively new with little field experience, there are significant advantages to this approach. As the cloud becomes more ubiquitous and businesses get comfortable with the notion of applications residing outside the firewall, we are seeing momentous shifts in VDI solutions that leverage the cloud to distribute low-cost desktop videoconferencing.

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