Azure

USE CASE

UNLOCKING COST-EFFECTIVE IT WITH DESKTOPS IN THE CLOUD

LHO Solutions has been around for 16 years, and specialises in IT solutions that leverage the power of the cloud to help organisations do more.

One of their clients, a big telecommunications company, was experiencing several operational challenges.

LHO Solutions was asked to deploy technological solutions that could address them; naturally, it was cloud to the rescue.

/THE CHALLENGE>

The problems that needed addressing were not unlike the issues faced by most organisations' IT departments today i.e. reducing IT spend and the risk of data loss, while improving performance and the organisation's security posture.

LHO's customer was spending far too much money on LTE bandwidth for its staff to enable them to work from home. Despite purchasing LTE SIMs with 30GB of data, which should be more than enough for a month of work, some staff would use it all up before the end of the month, prompting the customer to purchase more.

And while the business was not against data being used for personal reasons, the costs of buying more kept adding up.

Second, notebooks would often go missing, either through theft or misplacement. At an average cost of R15 000 each, replacing these was an expensive exercise.

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/THE PROPOSED SOLUTION>

Some research led LHO to investigate the use of Remote Desktop technology as a potential solution, but it was discovered that this used too much bandwidth to be of practical use.

Then, in 2019, Microsoft announced the general availability of Windows Virtual Desktop, a comprehensive desktop and app cloud virtualisation service built on the concept of "Virtual Desktop Infrastructure", or VDI.

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This service makes it possible for companies to run and control their desktop systems inside the cloud, giving the end user access to a fast, fully functional desktop and the business applications they need via a browser and an internet connection.

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The beauty of the solution lies in the fact that all the end user needs is an internet connection and a web browser running on some type of smart device. Once they're connected to the virtual desktop environment, they can access the internet over a breakout connection controlled by the business.

Security is another concern that VDI addresses, as it's handled inside the datacentre. Firewalls can be implemented and managed inside the cloud, and no data is stored on the devices used to access the VDI. That means the company's environment is not only protected from the inside, but sensitive data is not at risk if a worker's device is lost or stolen too.

The appeal of the solution lies in the control it gives the business, and its simple licensing model (Windows 10 Enterprise is all the customer needs to run WVD). By using VDI, the business can specify what the user can and cannot access, it can provide them with the exact the tools they need to get their jobs done, while protecting company data at the same time as it never leaves the datacentre.

This also solves the problem of needing to supply all remote workers with notebooks. Accessing the VDI environment does not require a powerful PC and can be done using dumb terminals or low-cost devices like Intel's NUC range of compact PCs. Replacing these if they get lost or stolen is a lot more cost-effective than replacing notebooks.

And because VDI uses such a small amount of bandwidth, the company can better control how much money they spend on connectivity. No more replenishing 30GB bundles meant to last a month after just a week.

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/THE DESIRED OUTCOME>

The desired outcome with any VDI installation is an improved end user experience, tighter control for the organisation, and lower costs associated with remote workers. VDI ticks all of those boxes, and with Microsoft's excellent Windows Virtual Desktop now widely available, rolling it out is possible for all interested parties.

LHO Solutions is still in the process of rolling it out to their customer to solve their challenges, but the concept is sound, and it's only a matter of time before the customer is enjoying all of the benefits of making the switch to VDI.

/GET IN TOUCH>

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