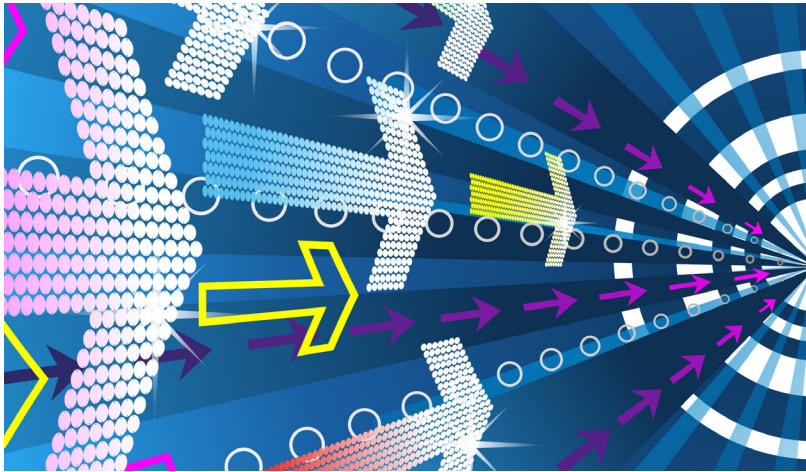


Putting an End to Migration Angst

BY EMBRACING PROVEN TACTICS, THE MIGRATION TO A VIRTUALIZED ENVIRONMENT CAN BE A SEAMLESS PROCESS.



Virtualization continues to have a transformative impact on the enterprise — sparking dramatic changes in how IT organizations address business needs. While the movement initially centered on server consolidation, it continues to evolve and spotlight opportunities for improved efficiencies across the enterprise, including the inevitable movement to address end-user computing issues.

The trend is quite clear in a recent IDG Research Services survey that polled IT leaders about their adoption strategies for end-user computing. For example, 68 percent of respondent organizations have either desktop or application virtualization solutions in place today. And, of those with virtualization solutions in place, over half indicate they are at least somewhat likely to migrate from existing solutions to VMware Horizon over the next 12 months.

Organizations are also clear in the driving forces behind their move away from existing solutions — predominantly Citrix — most often citing operation complexity, including provisioning and system management (60 percent), difficult and costly upgrades (48 percent) as well as system configuration and stability changes (48 percent) as the top issues. These are all solid reasons for making the transition.

Easing the Way

Even with a healthy percentage of firms citing clear migration plans, though, survey respondents identify a few stumbling blocks. Specifically, the time and cost associated with making a move (59 percent) and maintaining security and compliance (53 percent), not to mention solution scalability (45 percent). Fortunately, there are proven best practices that can ease the burden.

Overcoming time and cost concerns. Cost is one of the most consistent concerns with any IT project. And, understandably, an expansive migration from the current desktop deployment to a purely virtual environment has the potential to rapidly consume organizational resources in man-hours and equipment investments.

However, planning, due diligence and adherence to best practices can prove instrumental in keeping costs to a minimum. “For instance, when organizations embrace a proven application delivery solution the road to migration-based ROI is rather quick,” says Peter Silva, senior technical marketing manager with F5 Networks, a leading provider of software-defined solutions based in Seattle, Wash. “Utilizing the templates and other aspects designed into the application delivery solution ultimately facilitates the server configuration process as well as on-ramping users with access. And any time you can add efficiency to the process, it controls costs.”

Strengthening security and compliance. The key to overcoming security and compliance concerns starts with embracing a strong authentication policy. With robust access control in place, organizations have the ability to ensure that users are gaining appropriate access levels, including delivery to the correct virtual desktop. A proven application delivery solution plays a pivotal role here as well by providing awareness. For instance, by enabling granular access control, it’s possible to provide complete access to apps and documents — including the ability to read, write, edit and print — if a user requests access from a known laptop or mobile device on

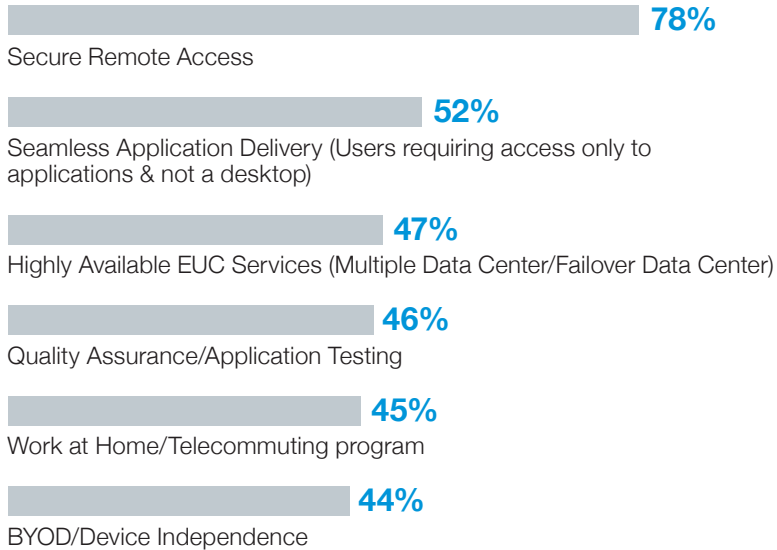
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Source: December 2014 IDG Enterprise Research

Successful migration ensures that mobile device users are not storing critical or potentially sensitive documents on a device that can easily be lost or stolen, thereby putting the critical or sensitive data in danger.

a trusted network. However, granular control may simply provide read-only access to a limited set of documents if the same user is on an insecure Wi-Fi connection or comes from an unrecognized desktop, smartphone or tablet.

Not only is security a concern while going through the migration process, but a vast majority of organizations (78 percent) also rate secure remote access as either a critical or very important use case to be addressed through a new solution. "Securing remote access is vital today because so many workers are mobile first," Silva says. "Society as a whole is changing, with large groups of people working from their mobile devices such as tablets or phones rather than being tethered to a cube in the office. Organizations recognize that people have the ability to be productive regardless of where they are."

Providing scalability and performance.

Effectively overcoming scalability and performance concerns starts with making sure the necessary infrastructure is in place to support the demands of a virtualized environment. Knowing a wide array of users will now be dependent on the data center rather than the RAM on their laptop has significant implications. For instance, data center capacity, servers, cooling,

etc., all need to be able to handle the shift, meaning the network, bandwidth and application delivery controllers all become key components. Making sure all the servers delivering to these environments are healthy and available is a must.

As with security, survey respondents are clear in rating seamless application delivery (52 percent) as a critical use case going forward. "It speaks to the importance of immediacy. If tools are difficult to access and fail to deliver a seamless user experience, the productivity aspect is lost," Silva says. "Throughout the process, organizations need to pay close attention to how well they are meeting performance expectations when compared to local access. Successful migrations should either enhance or at least maintain the user experience. When users are uncomfortable, support costs will skyrocket with added calls requesting help."

Sage Advice

As with any migration, organizations need to plan, prepare and take the time up front to determine the total cost of ownership (TCO). However, success really comes down to a matter of risk analysis and management, explains Silva. "There is potentially a risk of everything being in one location with multiple people trying to access it from diverse locations," Silva says.

When specifically looking at virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), most organizations feel the benefits clearly outweigh the risks. For example, efficient control over desktop systems means IT has a single location to push new applications rather than manually patching 1,500 laptops.

Even more important, a successful migration helps organizations reach a new level of data security. For instance, it ensures that mobile device users are not storing critical or potentially sensitive documents on a device that can easily be lost or stolen, thereby putting the critical or sensitive data in danger.

The right migration approach coupled with a properly sourced application delivery solution cost-effectively delivers simplicity and efficiency of deployment, maintenance and administration, with tighter desktop control, consistent or even improved performance and the enhanced user experience only available with VDI.

For additional information about F5 and VMware end-user computing solutions, visit www.f5.com/vmware or how to migrate to VMware, visit www.vmware.com/safepassage