Why VDI has taken off during the pandemic

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Over the past several months, we have brought to you stories about the massive movement of companies to the public cloud following the pandemic. When vast numbers of employees and customers needed to suddenly be serviced remotely, the public cloud seemed to be the way to go, given its scalability and agility.

But what if you are nervous about putting all your data, especially those that involve your intellectual property (IP), on the public cloud? What if you have heavy-duty, graphic-intensive workloads – like engineering services or building complex AI models with huge datasets that take a long time? The public cloud could be expensive in such instances.

This is where virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) has become popular. VDI is the technology that hosts desktop environments on a central server. In simple terms, all the data and applications reside in the company's IT infrastructure. And employees access that from anywhere and on any device.

"VDI allows you to protect your mission critical data, your IP, your R&D investments," Anirudh Shrotriya, MD of IT consulting firm SHRO Systems, said at the Times Techies webinar last week. "With data becoming so crucial, VDI allows data to be utilised, managed, backed up and stored, without it ever exiting the data centre," he said.

Manoj Kolekar, senior evangelist for technology at Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE), said VDI was a big reason why people could work remotely and yet do the same amount of business during the pandemic as before it. "There are many more customers going for VDI today, and those who are going for VDI are going for higher capacities," he said.

What's driving VDI is also cloud-like features that have been introduced. SHRO offers a menu of hardware and software options that customers can choose from, and these are delivered as a service. The IT infra will be in the customer's data centre, so they have control over it, but customers pay only a service charge and only for the extent of usage. No capital is locked up.

"Also, if there are 300 users, we'll provision for 350 users, but charge only for 300. And if new capacity is required, we'll enable that capacity in hours through a remote mana g eability feature. You can scale up, or scale down," Shrotriya said.

Managing the centralised systems have also become simple with hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI). "With our HCI offering Simplivity, there's no need to manage different components. HCI merges everything – storage, networking, compute, hypervisor – as a single appliance. You don't need to understand storage, don't need to know how servers have to be configured. Upgrades require just a click," said Kolekar.

> With VDI, you can get cloud-like economics, the same agility, scalability. But with on-premise performance, compliance and control.
> **Anirudh Shrotriya** | MD, SHRO SYSTEMS

> The main thing about VDI is security and control. Also, upgrades can be done centrally. It's very difficult to upgrade several hundreds or thousands of PCs.
> **Manoj Kolekar** | SR EVANGELIST – TECHNOLOGY, HEWLETT PACKARD

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