The Smart Disaster Recovery Strategy for Desktops

Desktops as a Service (DaaS)

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Executive Summary

Most organizations believe that in the unlikely event of a natural disaster or major power outage, their disaster recovery (DR) plan will keep them up and running. But the reality is, these events happen more often than you think and most DR plans aren't up to snuff. They typically cover servers and networks, but don't address desktops at all. That's because it's too expensive to duplicate physical desktops just for emergency situations. As a result, many businesses opt to do nothing. But if your desktops go down, your employees could be out of work for days – and the effect on your business could be disastrous. Instead, many businesses are turning to Desktops as a Service (DaaS) for an affordable, easy way to ensure worker productivity and business continuity, whenever or wherever disaster strikes.

"Unlikely" Seems More Likely Than Ever

No business is exempt from disaster. Think Sandy, Irene, Katrina. Whether your company is located in a region that seems increasingly prone to natural disasters like these, or in areas frequented by nor'easters, massive snow storms, earthquakes, or extreme heat, chances are that your business has—or will soon—find itself without power or without the means to get employees to your offices. Even if you personally don't experience natural disasters, your business will suffer if your local power supplier has an outage or desktop equipment fails.

Superstorm Sandy caused $6 billion in lost revenue for NY businesses.[1] Although Sandy may have been an extreme case, according to a recent CDW survey, more than 25 percent of enterprise IT systems are hit by outages of four hours or longer in a single year, resulting in losses of $1.7 billion.[2] At the individual business level, work disruption can cost thousands of dollars per employee per day in lost productivity and opportunities.

If your employees rely on physical desktops that are located in the office but can't get to your facility due to weather, or can't get their computers to work due to power outages, how will they access their applications and data? How will they keep your business going?

If you've implemented on-site virtual desktop infrastructure, but the server powering your virtual desktops is in a data center that has an outage, your employees will be down even if the facility they work in is running.

Desktop DR Hasn't Been Easy

Clearly, businesses need a disaster recovery plan for desktops. But, maintaining a separate DR facility for desktops—which is generally how people think DR is handled—is expensive, requiring heavy CapEx and OpEx investments. Paying for, and maintaining, a second facility and duplicate desktop infrastructure are more costly than most companies can handle.

Plus, if you have a DR facility, you need to make sure it keeps up with your production infrastructure—that it is a true duplicate environment. Best practice is to conduct annual testing to make sure the DR system is working and will be readily available when and if needed. According to Gartner, annual costs for disaster recovery testing can cost a business $150,000.[3]

## DaaS: The Desktop DR Insurance Plan

Desktops as a Service is increasingly being touted as the smart DR strategy for desktops. To understand why, you first need a quick primer on what DaaS is: Essentially, DaaS is a cloud-based offering that delivers virtual desktops and applications to end users on any device—including tablets, smartphones, laptops, PCs and thin clients—anywhere. Desktops and applications delivered from the cloud look and act as part of your corporate IT environment, though they are running at a secure remote data center. All the infrastructure, including the servers, software, network, and storage, is housed in your Service Provider's carrier-class, ultra-secure and highly available data centers. All you have to invest in is a monthly subscription for the number and type of desktops you need.

DaaS is ideal for Disaster Recovery because it's inherently DR-enabled. Service Providers that employ a grid-based DaaS platform can easily support a multi-geography, multi-data center DaaS DR offering. This means that, not only do you benefit from having desktops in a secure, high availability data center that is not affected by any disaster that hits your

main business facility, but also, those Service Providers can host your desktops across several data centers. That way, in the extremely unlikely event that one of their world-class data centers is impacted by a disaster, your employees can access desktops hosted in another of the Service Provider's data centers.

Here's why DaaS makes sense for desktop DR:

- Cloud-hosted desktops are always available, even when your office facilities are not.
- Employees are immediately productive; all they need is internet access.
- Employees can work from anywhere and any device, even their own personal device.
- Your IT organization isn't burdened by maintaining a separate DR environment or scrambling to get your DR facility ready when the need strikes. They simply reserve desktop capacity, design the recovery gold image, provision desktops into storage, and get ready to pull the trigger if/when needed.
- When your business grows, you can easily add virtual desktops to the DaaS DR subscription with just a few clicks of a mouse or taps on a screen.
- There are no costly or time-consuming annual DR testing requirements.
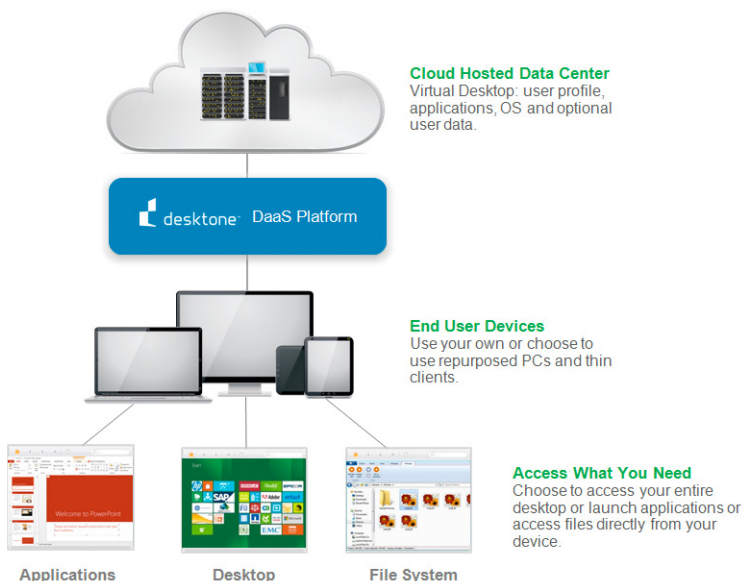
Typical DaaS DR Scenarios

Businesses generally consume DaaS for DR in one or more of these three ways:

1. **Insurance for physical desktop environment**
   In this scenario, you use DaaS as the DR strategy for your physical desktops, reserving capacity at the Service Provider for all or some of your users. All you have to do is set up the account and provision the images. Then, as soon as the need arises, you activate the desktops and are immediately ready to go with productive users.

2. **DR for on-site VDI**
   This allows you to maintain your on-premises VDI environment, but use DaaS in those emergency situations when your data center—and the server powering your virtual desktops—goes down. Your employees can be back up and running in minutes.

3. **All DaaS, all the time**
   Because DaaS is inherently DR-ready and makes life much easier for IT departments and end-users even when there's no disaster, many businesses opt to move their desktops to the cloud for everyday use. If a natural disaster or major outage happens back at the office, you're already covered. No separate desktop DR plan is needed.

A good DaaS DR solution can also handle different models, so you can mix and match to fit your business' needs. These include:

Hot or Cold

- Hot: Instant-on…virtual cloud-hosted desktops are always there, always ready. The capacity, including storage and compute, is allocated to and reserved for your business.
- Cold: You share infrastructure capacity with other businesses, perhaps for workers that don't need instant access, but do need to be up and running within a certain number of hours. Storage is allocated to your business.

Cloud Hosted Data Center
Virtual Desktop: user profile, applications, OS and optional user data.

desktone™ DaaS Platform

End User Devices
Use your own or choose to use repurposed PCs and thin clients.

Access What You Need
Choose to access your entire desktop or launch applications or access files directly from your device.

Applications   Desktop   File System

Dedicated or Shared Desktops

- Persistent, full Windows 7/8 desktops.
- Shared-session desktops via Remote Desktop Services. This alternative uses a smaller footprint per user and less storage, and is the lowest-cost option. Many businesses use a mix of shared and dedicated DaaS desktops for DR.

Conclusion

In today's 24x7x365 world, your business can't afford significant downtime. You can't afford for workers to be "off the job" for hours or days at a time because of a huge storm or unexpected power outage. If you don't have an effective DR plan for your desktops, consider DaaS for DR. It's the simplest, most afford-able and sure-fire way to get employees back to productivity fast. You never know when the next storm or event is going to happen, and you don't want to be a casualty of that next big one.

About Desktone

DDesktone provides the industry's only multi-tenant desktop virtualization platform for delivering desktops and applica-tions as a cloud service, enabling the deployment of Windows desktops and applications from a private, public or hybrid cloud to any end user device. Desktone enables IT service providers to rapidly provision desktops and applications to users connected on any device, anywhere, without the upfront costs and complexity of traditional desktop virtualization – transforming desktops from a CAPEX to OPEX item. Leading service providers, such as Dell, Fujitsu, NEC, Time Warner Cable and Dimension Data, have selected Desktone's Platform to offer desktops and apps as a cloud service. Founded in 2007, Desktone is funded by Highland Capital and Softbank and is headquartered in Boston, MA.

For more information, visit www.desktone.com.

[1] "Hurricane Sandy's Rising Costs," NY Times, November 27, 2012

[2] "2010 CDW Business Continuity Straw Poll: Plans Don't Align with Reality."

[3] "Best Practices for Planning and Managing Disaster Recovery Testing," Gartner, August 2011

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