Why accounting firms need to use
Desktop as a Service (DaaS)

by Matthew Chell

**The evolution of the work model has arrived! Is your firm ready to go hybrid?
With Covid-19 causing a worldwide work from home shift, organisations had to move at a rapid pace to support a remote work environment. Now, with the new government initiative 'Our Rural Future', employees will have the legal right to request remote working under new legislation planned to be introduced later this year. The Government will also promote a hybrid or blended working experience, allowing employees more flexibility to choose how, where, and when they work.**

According to a recent Gartner survey, over 80% of company leaders plan to allow employees to work remotely some of the time with almost half intending to allow employees to work remotely full time going forward. Recently, Vodafone, one of Ireland's leading telecommunications companies have introduced a 40:60 hybrid model by implementing a flexible working policy for employees. Bank of Ireland also plan to move to a hybrid model after a survey revealed that "91 per cent preferred a more flexible way of working post-Covid".

To remain modern and dynamic, accounting firms will have to continue to rely on technology to facilitate their digital transformation in the post-pandemic world.

What is DaaS?

DaaS which stands for Desktop-as-a-Service, is a type of virtual computing. DaaS enables any size business to deliver cloud hosted virtual desktops and apps to any device, from anywhere, securely. One of the most significant advantages of incorporating a DaaS model is a cost saving. DaaS provides virtualized desktops on an operational basis, meaning that the price is on a subscription model, per month per user, rather than a traditional IT spend.

As one of the busiest sectors in the world, accounting firms have realised that to provide an effective client service in an ever-growing global industry, they must consistently innovate.

As work is no longer a place, firms have moved to an "anywhere access" workstyle adopting new remote working solutions such as digital workspaces in the form of DaaS.

What are the benefits of DaaS for accounting firms?

For most businesses, transitioning to a digital workspace is a relatively seamless process, which can't be said about all IT projects and investments! Along with features and functions, the main questions that accountants will ask are around their clients' data and security.

Security

With the huge increase in cyber-attacks during the pandemic, especially in the financial industry, it is essential that accounting firms have a secure cloud solution in place. Your clients' critical financial information needs to be secure and DaaS includes a high level of security measures which help protect and comply with data protection.

What's more, many businesses were forced to react quite quickly to the pandemic and where they may have a solution in place it may not necessarily be the most secure or user friendly. This may have resulted in sending sensitive information via email, which is not best practice, so having a team-wide solution that securely provides access and collaboration is an attractive option. We understand that this is a critical requirement for the accounting industry due to the highly sensitive nature of your work.

When utilizing a DaaS, companies will benefit from a virtual desktop with endpoint management capabilities to ensure enterprise-class security, reliability and the following advantages and features:

Anywhere, Anytime, Any Device Access

DaaS gives your employees the ability to access their virtual desktops 24/7 from anywhere and on any device. If you have an internet connection and a device such as a laptop, tablet or smartphone, you can securely access your data by simply entering your workspace URL, followed by a multifactor authentication and you will then be able to view your virtual desktop.

With DaaS, you have access to a Windows Desktop and all other line of business applications. These are all accessed under the same single sign on which greatly reduces the time spent switching from one application to the next and multiple password entries.

Disaster Recovery/ Business Continuity

When you work from a hosted desktop or at an on-premise system in your office, you become dependent on that specific desktop or system. If your PC or server crashes, do you have a back-up plan in place? If you don't, this can result in a loss of data, and/or time that is critical to your firm. With DaaS, you can access a virtual desktop from various devices so you can easily log in from your own personal device if needed.

When using a DaaS, no data physically resides on the laptop/tablet. This can also prove invaluable if a computer is lost or stolen as the virtual desktop can be wiped remotely and no data is ever stored on the device.

Furthermore, with a DaaS you get the added peace of mind of built-in disaster recovery because regardless of the situation, fire, flood or global pandemic, your data always resides in the cloud and not on a device. This ensures that your staff can always continue to work seamlessly, without interruption.

Collaboration

As working from home is here to stay, it is essential that employers facilitate collaborative working environments for their employees and clients alike. Client meetings have also changed to video and conference style, so file sharing and approval needs to work in this manner. And not forgetting decision-makers, they require access to the correct data to make approval process faster and more streamlined. The more streamlined the firm's processes are, the better the relationships are with clients due to high quality service and efficiency you can provide. Many DaaS solutions create a modern workspace to improve productivity and team collaboration. The platform allows employees to work in real time on files and financial data with one another (this can be especially beneficial during deadlines).

Scale to Meet Your Needs

Like in all industries, staff numbers in accountancy firms can fluctuate. Typically, this can mean the procurement of new hardware for both the office and remote working as well as your Microsoft licenses and various other line of business subscriptions. This requirement can be difficult to size, forecast and budget for. With DaaS, you can scale up or down with ease and add or remove users, as required. This comes into its own when apprentices or graduates join for certain periods of the year.

Evergreen IT

Even though you are working remotely, the device you're using is still a physical one. These devices need to be managed

and updated and this will prove very difficult for the IT team while employees are at home. When using a DaaS, no data physically resides on the laptop/tablet which means all updates can be performed online without the need for face-to-face intervention. In addition, the cloud vendors take responsibility for the underlying infrastructure, negating the need for an in-house IT team to be responsible for this.

Cost Effective

In contrast to many other solutions and subscriptions to online accounting software where cost is continually increasing, with many DaaS solutions, there is no upfront IT investment, ongoing IT staff costs nor maintenance charges. Instead, there may be an all-inclusive monthly, predictable, per-user fee which includes 24-7 support and all software updates.

In Conclusion

There may be uncertainty around the future structure of work and what the post-pandemic world will look like, but one thing is for sure – the way that we work has changed forever. Companies no longer need to have the best office spaces or locations to attract the top talent in their field. The most successful companies will be those who can deliver a progressive, positive digital experience to employees and clients alike.

Our DaaS solution, My VirtualWorkspace, is a digital workspace that offers

employees freedom and security to complete their duties anytime, anywhere, on any device with the same user experience every time. We deliver an enterprise level solution but without the need for a large up front capital expenditure; our USP is that we can provide this on a pay per user, per month model that allows SMB's to have the very same levels of security, mobility and collaboration as Ireland's largest companies.

Get a FREE demo with our expert team and see how My VirtualWorkspace can empower remote accounting professional workforce while maintaining the highest security and compliance.

Get in touch at www.enterprise-solutions.ie/demo or by email info@enterprise-solutions.ie

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Matthew is a well-versed Digital Workspace Consultant supporting businesses of all sizes on their transformation journey to enabling a modern workspace.