Staples

Everything as a service — right down to the desktop!

WHY LEAVE SO MUCH CAPITAL SITTING IDLE?

The last thing any IT manager wants to do is to waste valuable budget dollars. But with new IT demands coming faster and faster, we don't always stop to think about the value our money has over time, and how easy it is to squander it simply by paying for something all up front.

For example, on the day you purchase a new hard disk drive to store your business data, you don't immediately fill it up with data. You begin by using a small fraction of its storage capacity. The rest is sitting idle.

The same can be said for the dollars you spent to purchase that hard disk drive. You begin by using a fraction of the value you invested in, and leave the rest sitting idle waiting for you to use it eventually.

Now extend that equation to every unit of equipment you own. Every computer, every disk drive, every printer, every switch, every router, every firewall and so on.

Can your company afford to leave so much capital sitting idle? Even if it can, should it?

A FUNDAMENTAL CLOUD VALUE PROPOSITION

Next look at something that works in exactly the opposite way; cloud computing. One of the most basic value propositions of cloud computing is that you only pay for what you use, and you pay only as you use it. No capital sits idle. You spend once you've received value.

Over time this is far more cost-efficient, and convenient. When you purchase something, you own it. The only way to recapture any of the investment is to sell it, and you'll seldom recapture a large percentage of what you originally spent. With cloud computing, if you decide you don't like the service you're using, you simply change to another. You have no "sunk bucks" to worry about. You have no long-term investment at all. This is a huge value of engaging a cloud computing strategy.

That's not the only cloud value, however. Others include:

- You always get the latest, greatest technology in the cloud. When applications are updated, that update takes place at the cloud server. The software is delivered to you as a service, so you immediately start using the newest version once it's loaded. You never have to wait for installers to get around to your machine.

- Cloud Services are operated by dedicated, expert professionals. This is all they do for a living. They're not people who have another job but have also been tasked with figuring out how to run the computers. These

professionals take care of most everything, so you don't have to worry about making it work. You just worry about your work!

- Because cloud operators share servers, storage, and other resources among a large number of customers, each customer pays for only a fraction of the cost of operating the cloud service.

- Better service, at a lower price.

- There's always someone to resolve problems or issues.

- You always enjoy the best possible user experience.

You begin to wonder "why can't everything work this way?"

XAAS – THE IDEA OF HAVING EVERYTHING AS A SERVICE

It began with Software-as-a-Service (SaaS). The programs are running elsewhere, not on your servers. Your users just access them via a browser. Then Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) made it possible for companies to stop owning and operating their own servers and storage. Instead, they simply use someone else's.

Ultimately, the goal is to have everything come as a service (XaaS). This includes the devices users access your network with.

DEVICE-AS-A-SERVICE (DAAS)

You don't buy a computer or mobile device for what it is. Once you've purchased it, you don't just leave it sitting on your desk doing nothing. That would make it a very expensive paperweight.

You buy it for what it does.

You purchase a computer or a mobile device so you can get work done. Documents, spreadsheets, presentations, researching on the World Wide Web. Analyzing data to support better decision making. Communicating with your colleagues and clients. Tracking inventory and transactions. Every day new applications are introduced which enable your user device to do more for you. That's what you buy a computing device for. For what it does.

With Device-as-a-Service (DaaS) you get to pay for what it does as it does it for you. No idle capital. Functionality. You're paying for capacity and performance. For results.

Then, when something else is introduced that does it better, you get to exchange what you're using for the newest, latest, greatest device. Just like cloud services.

DAAS – A COMPLETE SERVICE

When your company purchases a device for your use, they become responsible for that device. They need to make sure it continues operating properly. They pass some of that responsibility along to you, to ask that you not load potentially damaging software onto it. They worry about the device. You, as a part of your company, worry about that device as well.

In the age of "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) your company has, rather happily, passed the complete responsibility along to you. They don't worry about maintaining your device, or keeping it running. They just worry about protecting you and their network from potentially hazardous things your device could do, like pass along viruses or other malware to the rest of your network.

With DaaS, you stop worrying about the device you will use to access resources and communicate with colleagues. While you're the one using it to get your work done, the device itself remains the property of your DaaS provider who maintains it, services, supports, and owns full responsibility for its lifetime performance. DaaS is a complete, constant, and comprehensive service that covers the entire lifecycle of the device you use:

SELECTION OF THE RIGHT DEVICE

With more and more manufacturers entering the market with more devices in more sizes and capacities than ever before, you'll need expert guidance to help you choose the best device for your users' specific needs from experts whose job it is to stay current on all the new, worthwhile entries. Unless your company is in the technology business or is large enough to have a dedicated IT department, you'll require assistance with configuring each device for the best possible usability and performance.

DELIVERY & DEPLOYMENT

Once configured you'll want the delivery and deployment of the devices to be handled by an expert who will provide you with the best chance of having your users adopt and use their new devices enthusiastically. It is estimated that 75% of technology initiatives fail because the users don't adopt the new system.

ONGOING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Making sure every device gives its user the best possible experience consistently and constantly requires constant vigilance, monitoring the performance and responsiveness of each device. If a device is ever lost or stolen, this management turns into your emergency defense plan to remove all useful data from the device so it can't be used by outsiders. The data on the device is almost always far more valuable than the device itself.

FULL LIFECYCLE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

You never want your users to wonder what to do to get their devices fixed should something go wrong. With DaaS, there's always someone ready to repair or resolve any issues your users may have with their devices.

END-OF-LIFE RECYCLE

Retrieving devices when they reach end of useful life, properly and completely erasing any data that may be stored on them, and replacing them with the newest, latest greatest device fully prepared and ready for use, with full access to the same resources the retired device connected to. Proper disposal of equipment is every bit as important as procuring the right equipment in the first place. Perhaps even more important.

WHERE WILL DAAS BENEFIT YOU MOST?

While a fully-configured, fully-functional, fully-supported user device is an enormous benefit to anyone doing anything in any company, there are some areas where DaaS makes the most sense.

IN THE FIELD

More and more "information workers" and others are leaving brick and mortar offices and operating more and more out in the field. From field service specialists working at customers' locations to repair or maintain their equipment to "road-warrior" sales professionals visiting clients at their own premises, to production people designing, specifying, or otherwise developing work from the comfort of their own homes, more people in many organizations are working away from a traditional office.

This also puts them physically furthest away from needed repair and support resources, so if anything goes wrong with their computing and communication devices they need to know exactly who to turn to for help.

REMOTE/BRANCH OFFICES

Very few companies can justify placing IT support personnel in remote offices far away from corporate headquarters. IT and operational managers appreciate having a resource local to each remote office that they can depend upon to take care of users when their devices run into trouble. Leveraging a DaaS provider with national presence makes this easy to coordinate, with only one partner covering most of the landscape.

POWER USER COMMUNITIES

While every user likes to have the most up-to-date equipment there are some "power users" who actually must have the state-of-the-art to maintain a competitive advantage. Designers, architects, artists, scientists, those whose work benefits from the newest developments in IT hardware and software. The ability to cycle their equipment out and replace it more frequently is a feature of DaaS that offers tremendous value here.

RUGGED ENVIRONMENTS

While there are devices that are specifically designed to withstand harsh, difficult environments like shop floors, airfields, high-dust environments, field survey teams and such, this is also an excellent place to leverage the advantages of DaaS.

SEASONAL OR OTHERWISE ROTATING TEAMS

Some business functions increase and decrease in volume based on seasonality, the execution of special campaigns, or other programs. Avoiding capital investments that will sit idle once a period of increased activity ends is easily accomplished by leveraging DaaS.

GETTING STARTED WITH DAAS ON A SMALLER SCALE – MANAGED PRINT SERVICES

Fortunately, DaaS is one service in which client companies can "dip their toe in the water" before they move ahead for a full rollout. A great place to start using a DaaS strategy is the area of managed print services.

Just like user devices, printers are not purchased for what they are, they're purchased for what they do, print. The difference with printers is that they constantly need supplies and materials to keep them doing what they do, and whoever is responsible for making sure those printers are kept supplied has another full-time job which makes it a nuisance and a distraction.

Unless those responsible are from your Managed Print Services provider. They provide the printer, monitor its performance, keep it supplied with toner, ink, paper, and whatever other consumables they require. Your people stop worrying about keeping the printers working, and just keep working.

Printers are also far more mechanical in nature than most solid-state computing devices. More moving parts means more parts that can break, wear out, or otherwise require servicing. This is a responsibility best assigned to a provider who is expert at maintaining, supplying, and repairing printers.

DAAS: A GOOD IDEA

No matter how many computing and communication devices you have in your company, have a conversation with a reliable provider about how DaaS can benefit your operations, lower your costs, reduce your stress, and increase your productivity and profitability. You may find yourself saying, "Now DaaS a good idea!"