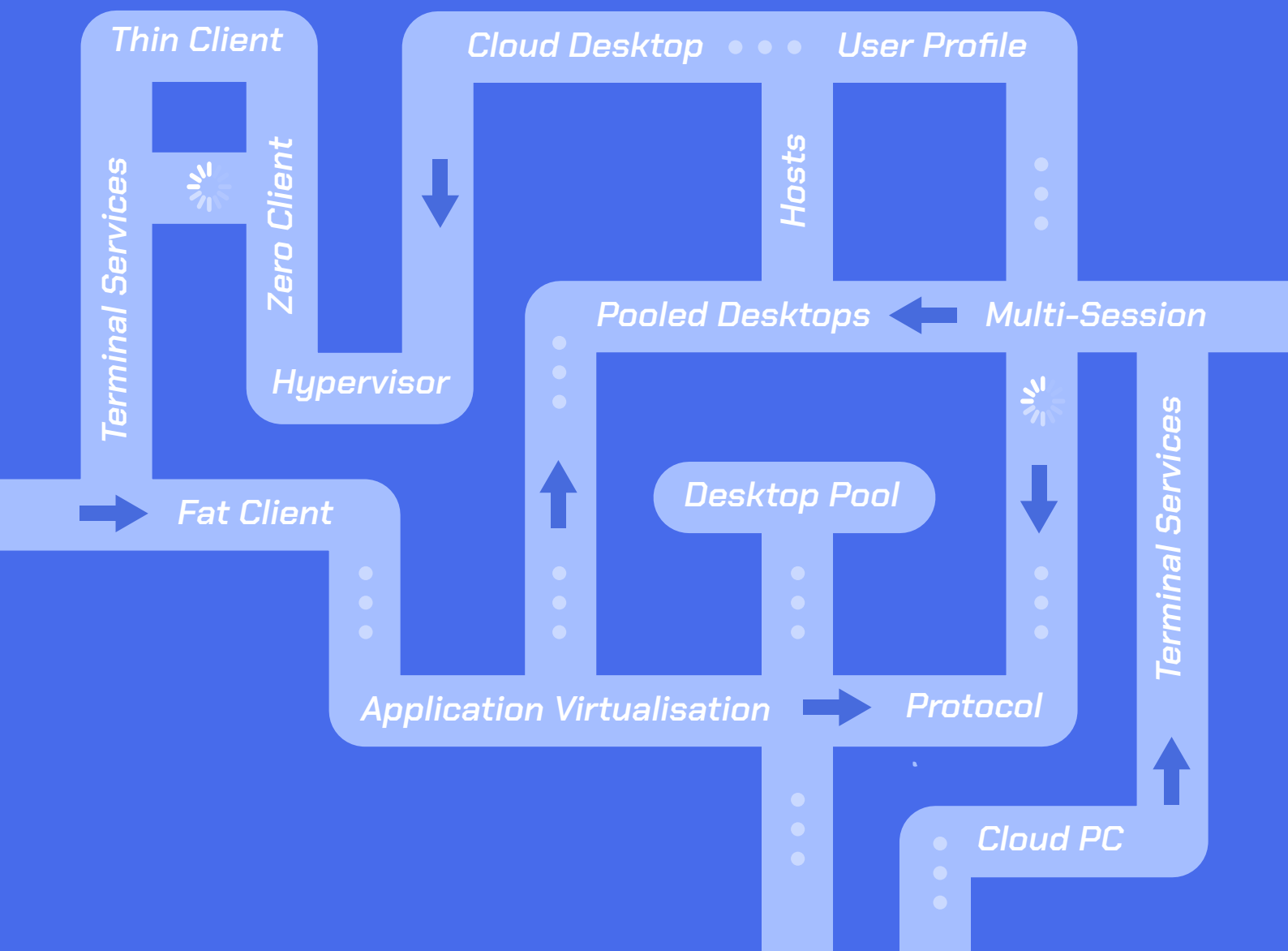


A Glossary of Virtual Desktop Terms

A guide to the standard and vendor-specific names and expressions used in the virtual desktop industry



Introduction

Virtual desktop technology allows users to access their desktop environment and applications from any device, anywhere, and anytime. Virtual desktops are hosted on a centralized server and delivered to the users over a network, providing improved security, reduced costs, and enhanced productivity.

However, virtual desktops are also a complex and fast-evolving field, with many different terms and expressions that can be confusing or ambiguous. Different vendors may use different names for the same concept or the same name for different concepts. Some vendors may also have unique names for their products or features that others do not widely use.

This document aims to provide a table of all the names, expressions, and meanings of the virtual desktop world, with examples of different vendors that use them. The table is organised alphabetically and includes both standard and vendor-specific terms.

A Table of Virtual Desktop Terms

TERM & EXPLANATION	VENDOR-SPECIFIC COMMENTS OR NAMES
<h3>Application Streaming</h3> <p>A technology that delivers applications to the users on demand, without installing them on the local device.</p>	Citrix (XenApp), Microsoft (App-V), and VMware (ThinApp) offer application streaming.
<h3>Application Virtualisation</h3> <p>A technology that isolates applications from the underlying operating system and delivers them to the users as a service.</p>	Citrix (XenApp), Microsoft (App-V), and VMware (ThinApp) offer application virtualisation.
<h3>Client</h3> <p>A device or software that connects to a virtual desktop server and displays the user interface and applications.</p>	Clients can be thin, thick, or zero clients. Dell (Wyse), HP (t620), and IGEL (UD3) offer clients.
<h3>Cloud Desktop</h3> <p>A type of virtual desktop that is hosted and managed by a third-party cloud service provider.</p>	Amazon (WorkSpaces), Google (CloudReady), and Microsoft (Azure Virtual Desktop, Windows 365) offer cloud desktops.
<h3>Cloud PC</h3> <p>Like DaaS, a different term for the same thing.</p>	Coined by Microsoft, especially with the Windows 365 product.

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Desktop as a Service (DaaS)

A delivery model that provides virtual desktops as a subscription-based service from a cloud provider.

Citrix (Cloud Services), VMware (Horizon Cloud), Microsoft [AVD], and Nutanix (Xi Frame) offer DaaS.

Desktop Pool

A collection of virtual desktops that share the same configuration and settings.

Citrix (Machine Catalogs), VMware (Horizon View), and Microsoft (Remote Desktop Services) support desktop pools.

Fat Client

A device that has full hardware and software components and can run applications locally as well as remotely.

Fat clients are used to access virtual desktops, primarily hosted desktops or VDI, as they provide more flexibility and performance for the user. Dell (OptiPlex), HP (EliteDesk), and Lenovo (ThinkCentre) offer fat clients.

Hosted Desktop

A type of virtual desktop that is hosted on a remote server and accessed by the users over a network.

Hosted desktops can be either shared or dedicated. Citrix (XenDesktop), VMware (Horizon View), and Microsoft (Remote Desktop Services) offer hosted desktops.

Hosts

The physical servers run the hypervisor and host the virtual machines that provide the virtual desktops.

Hosts can be either standalone or clustered. Dell (PowerEdge), HP (ProLiant), and Lenovo (ThinkSystem) offer hosts.

Hypervisor

A software that creates and runs virtual machines on a physical server.

Hypervisors can be either type 1 or type 2. Citrix (XenServer), VMware (ESXi), and Microsoft (Hyper-V) offer hypervisors.

Multi-Session

A type of hosted desktop that allows multiple users to share the same desktop environment and applications on a single virtual machine. This is standard for Windows 10 and Windows 11.

Multi-session desktops, also known as session-based desktops, are offered in the cloud by Citrix (XenApp), VMware (Horizon View), and Microsoft (Remote Desktop Services).

Personal Desktop (Persistent Desktop)

A type of hosted desktop that provides each user with a dedicated and personalised desktop environment and applications on a separate virtual machine.

Personal desktops are also known as virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI). Citrix (XenDesktop), VMware (Horizon View), and Microsoft (Remote Desktop Services) offer personal desktops.

Pooled Desktops (Non-Persistent Desktop)

Pooled desktops refer to a shared virtual desktop environment where multiple users access separate desktop instances from a shared pool of virtual machines. Each user gets a fresh, standardized desktop session upon login, which is not retained after logout. This setup optimizes resource utilization and reduces costs by dynamically allocating desktops from the pool to users as needed.

Pooled desktops are created from a master image and are refreshed or deleted after each use. Citrix (XenDesktop), VMware (Horizon View), and Microsoft (Remote Desktop Services) offer pooled desktops.

Protocol

A set of rules and standards that enable communication and data transfer between a virtual desktop server and a client.

Citrix (HDX), VMware (PCoIP and Blast), and Microsoft (RDP and RemoteFX) offer protocols.

Terminal Services

A technology that provides users with access to a shared hosted desktop on a remote server.

Terminal services are also known as remote desktop services and are the basis for multi-session desktops. Citrix (XenApp), VMware (Horizon View), and Microsoft (Remote Desktop Services) offer terminal services.

Thin Client

A device with minimal hardware and software components relies on the server for most of the processing.

Thin clients are used to access virtual desktops, especially cloud desktops or DaaS, as they reduce the cost and complexity of the client device. Dell (Wyse), HP (t620), and IGEL (UD3) offer thin clients.

User Profile

A set of user-specific data and settings that are stored on a server and applied to a virtual desktop when the user logs in.

Profiles can be either local or roaming. Citrix (Profile Management), VMware (User Environment Manager), and Microsoft (Roaming User Profiles) offer profile management solutions.

Virtual Desktop

A desktop environment and applications that are delivered to the users from a remote server over a network.

Virtual desktops can be either hosted or cloud-based and either shared or dedicated.

Zero Client

A device with no operating system or local storage only provides network connectivity and display capabilities.

Zero clients are used to access virtual desktops, especially cloud desktops or DaaS, as they eliminate the need for any client-side configuration or maintenance. Dell (Wyse P25), HP (t310), and Teradici (PCoIP Zero Client) offer zero clients.