Your Office Anywhere

Hosted Desktops

An introduction to Hosted Desktops from Your Office Anywhere

Hosted Desktops from Your Office Anywhere provide Flexibility, Reliability and Security and offer genuine cost savings against in-house IT infrastructure.
This paper sets out to explain what Hosted Desktops are, how they work, their features and benefits and the things to look out for when comparing hosting providers.

What are Hosted Desktops?

Hosted Desktops look and feel very much like a normal desktop PC you may use in your office or at home. The difference is that everything is running on a computer "In the Cloud" or in actual fact, in our of our secure UK data centres. All the applications, all the data, and all the processing happens on the cloud servers.

So, why is this useful?

By running everything on a hosted desktop you can run shared applications, or share data with others in your office (or another office) without having to install an in-house "Server" or create complicated solutions to connect from one office or branch to another. Everyone just connects to the hosted desktops.

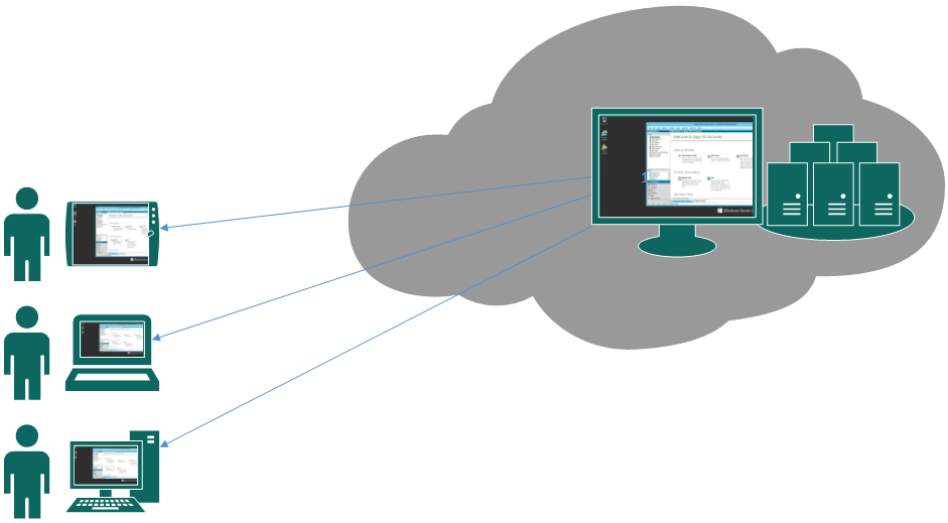
Hosted desktops also mean you don't have to be in your office to run your business applications. As long as you have a reasonable Internet connection, 1Mbps or above, you can connect to your hosted desktop wherever you are, even via 3G or 4G.

You can also connect to it on pretty well any device, Windows PCs/tablets, iPads, MACs, Android tablets can all connect to a hosted desktop.

All the hosted desktops used by people in your business will be running on the same server and applications can interface with each other allowing you to email invoices from your accounting application via MS Outlook for example.

Hosted Desktops are also scalable to hundreds or thousands of users

As hosted desktops are paid for on a monthly rental basis they are funded from operating expenditure (OPEX) rather than capital expenditure (CAPEX). This includes the Microsoft licences.



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Real world examples of Hosted Desktops and their benefits

- Businesses who need to run a shared application for multiple users but don't want the expense, risk or hassle of an on-site server.
- Businesses who want to reduce IT capex, upgrade and support costs by cloud hosting all their applications and data.
- Businesses wanting to give access to their Windows based Line Of Business applications to users of other operating systems such as MACs or iPads.
- Businesses with multiple offices/branches wanting to share applications and data without complicated IT Infrastructure or security worries.
- Employees who want to be able to run their Line Of Business applications from home, customer's office or while on holiday.
- Developers wanting to provide customers with database applications who are finding the need to buy a server or the significant upfront cost of buying licences for SQL server and Client Access Licences a barrier to sales

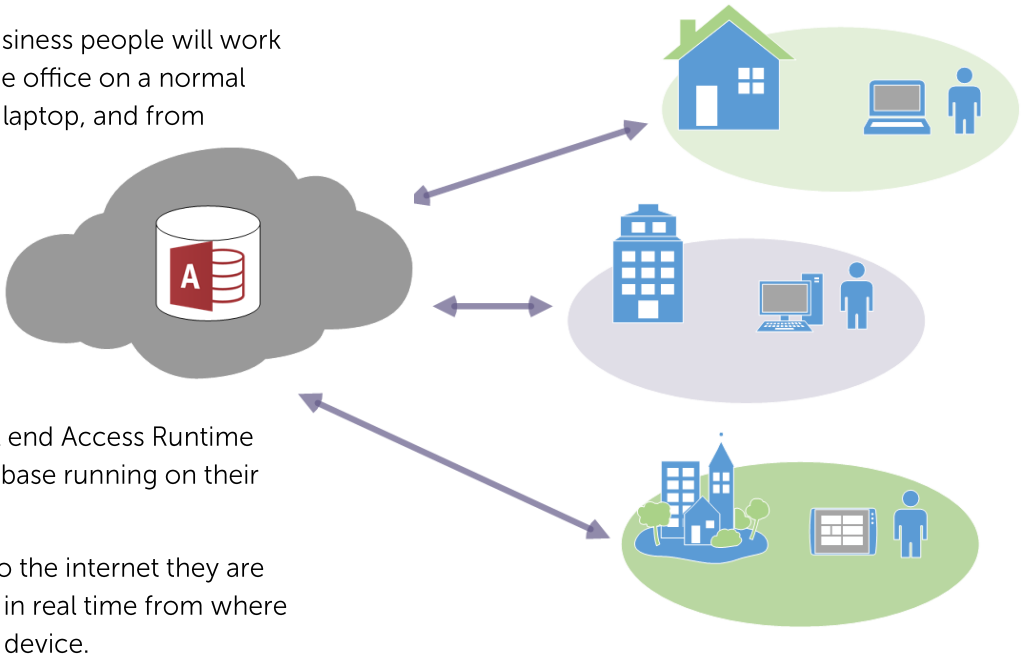
Key Features

- Access business applications from anywhere over the internet.
- Run your business applications on most devices.
- Share applications and data with colleagues or associates.
- Hosted applications can interface with each other.
- Rent not buy Windows licences enabling flexible staffing.

Mini Case Study

This scenario is typical of many small business. The company in question has developed a Microsoft Access Database which contains all the company's customers and prospects. The database is used by all the company employees.

Being a small but dynamic business people will work from many locations: from the office on a normal PC; from home or hotel on a laptop, and from customer's premises or coffee shops on a tablet.

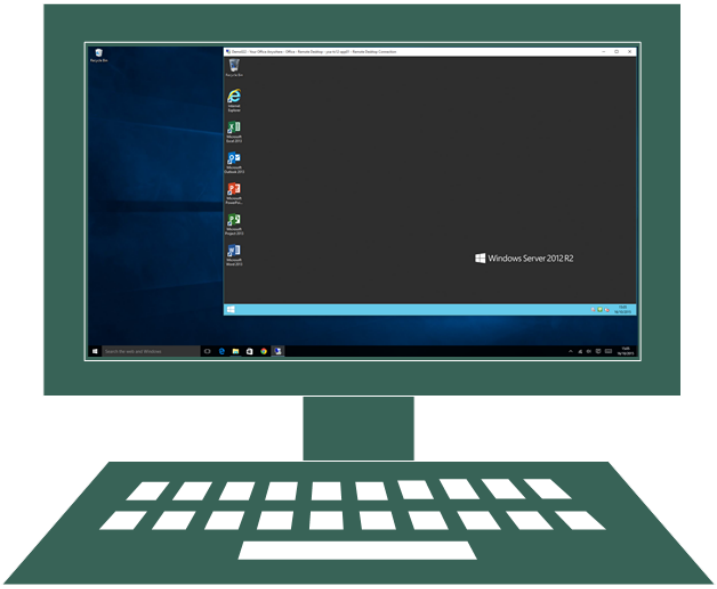


All the employees use Hosted Desktops to run their Access database application. The backend database sits on their shared drive and each user has their own front end Access Runtime (to reduce licence costs) database running on their hosted desktop.

As long as they have access to the internet they are all able to run the application in real time from where ever they are, and whichever device.

Three ways to run your hosted desktop/applications

Hosted desktops from Your Office Anywhere use solely Microsoft technology to deliver the desktop or individual applications running on them. There are 3 different methods of running the desktop or applications and it is down to the customer's preference or specific circumstances which method is used.



Full Remote Desktop

A desktop within a desktop. In the picture opposite you can see a hosted desktop (black screen) running on a Windows 2012 server. The hosted desktop is running on a Windows 10 PC, but could equally be a MAC, iPad or Android tablet

The Remote Desktop can be run full screen or reduced down as required by the individual user.

RemoteApps and Desktop Connections

Instead of a full desktop , individual applications can be published to a Windows 7, 8 or 10 Start Menu/Start Screen. The application, once launched, will look and behave exactly like a locally installed application, they also have access to a hosted Home Drive (H:) and a shared data (S:) drive, to enable multiple users to work on the same data.

Web Portal

With an easy to remember URL and secure authentication users can access their business applications from a web browser anywhere there is an Internet connection.

Great if you want to check in from home or while on holiday and don't have a laptop.

Technical Pages

The Hosted Servers

Every Your Office Anywhere hosted desktop customer gets their own dedicated Windows 2012r2 server. This is a virtual server with a starting specification of 2GB RAM and 1 processor core.

The virtual server runs on one of dozens of physical server "Hosts", the hosts each have minimum 96GB RAM and 8 processor cores. As the customer's server is virtual if there was ever a hardware problem with a host, or it was just overloaded we can move the customer's server to another host instantly and seamlessly with no interruption to the users, they won't know it's happened.

Each physical host runs many virtual servers enabling maximum utilisation of resources which in turn reduces costs.

The host servers are housed in a state of the art data centre, accredited to ISO 27001 for Information Security Management. The data centre has a host of security and availability measures including multiple internet connections through different providers, uninterruptible power supplies and diesel generators.

Data is stored on a high spec Storage Area Network (SAN) with fast disks running at 15,000rpm

Backups

One of the advantages to hosted desktops is running your systems on "Enterprise" class infrastructure. This is particularly true of backups which have often been a headache for small businesses, remembering to take tapes off site or worrying about whether something has been backed up correctly or having the skills to restore it. Data, Operating Systems, and Databases are backed up to disk and then transmitted offsite to a second data centre in case of disaster.

The backup policies for Your Office Anywhere are as follows:

- Documents such as Word or Excel stored on the Shared drive are backed up three times a day. Backups are retained for 20 days.
- Server operating systems, which may include applications and their databases are backed up once a week with 1 copy being retained. Where it is necessary to store volatile data on a server instead of a shared drive, this can be backed up more frequently.
- SQL Databases are backed up daily and copies kept for 1 week.
- All Exchange servers are backed up daily. Items in Recover Deleted Items are retained for 30 days
- We can provide specific backup requirements for customers please provide your requirements and ask for a quote

Server Management

Hosting with Your Office Anywhere means you can forget about the day to day maintenance and management of your server, we look after all of that.

All servers have Anti-Virus installed and centrally managed. Critical Windows updates are deployed centrally and any Operating System issues are dealt with by our dedicated UK help desk.

When your operating system comes to end of life and is no longer supported we will upgrade your server to the latest version at no extra cost.

Why Choose Your Office Anywhere?

At Your Office Anywhere we have been delivering Cloud hosting solutions longer than almost anyone is in the market long before anyone coined the term "Cloud" and certainly longer than names like Microsoft Azure or Amazon Web Services. In that time we have learned what customers want from a hosted desktop service and have developed a platform which delivers flexibility, scalability, security and convenience at a really competitive price. As an organisation we are proud to be certified for ISO 27001 Information Security Management System, so you know your data is safe with us.

Listed below are some of the features and benefits you should look for in a hosted desktop provider, that come as standard with Your Office Anywhere:

- UK Helpdesk manned by Microsoft Certified Professionals available on call 24/7 for critical issues.
- Helpdesk available by phone or email, plus access to knowledgebase.
- Monitoring of CPU and Memory usage for performance of the server.
- Ability to remote control customer's PCs to assist with supporting issues.
- Installation of any software that is supported on a Terminal Server solution.
- Managed (Locked Down) desktop to simplify user experience and reduce downtime/support calls.
- Anti-Virus on the Server.
- Windows Updates on the Server
- Rental of Microsoft licences, and licence reporting for compliance.
- Upgrades to latest versions of Microsoft applications.
- UK Data Centres - Important for customers who must keep their data in the UK.
- All Infrastructure: servers, switches, storage etc. owned by Your Office Anywhere.
- Ability to "Snapshot" servers prior to software upgrades.
- Failover to alternate host server in the event of a hardware failover.
- No long term contracts, just rolling 1 month contract.

Free Trial

Moving to the cloud can be a big decision, especially for established businesses for existing on premises infrastructure. To make the decision easier we can provide a free trial/demo account for you and your colleagues to try the solution for a couple of weeks. The trial server includes a copy of Sage 50 Accounts and Microsoft Office 2013, including Outlook and a working email account.

Test Server

To test how a particular application runs we can provide you with access to a Windows 2012 r2 server, help install your software and provide you with demo accounts to make sure that your application works as you expect it to on our platform. This is all free of charge.

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Your course to the Cloud

Hosted Desktops are just one of the many Cloud computing solutions available on the Your Office Anywhere platform. Choosing the right solution depends upon individual circumstances, there is no one size fits all, and for some businesses Cloud may not be the answer.

Our technical sales team is staffed solely by experienced, time served IT consultants who specialise in working with businesses to understand the challenges the business is trying to overcome, the constraints (financial, technical, geographic), and identify the solution that is right for that business. Whether that is public cloud, private cloud, or a hybrid (which is probably the most common), and if a cloud solution isn't appropriate for your business or circumstance we will tell you.

If you are considering moving to the Cloud, or you are a new business starting up and looking at what options you have to provide your business with the flexible IT solution it needs, please get in touch. We can provide no obligation advice, indicative costs or formal quotations. We don't employ high pressure sales techniques beyond perhaps calling or emailing you to follow up on a proposal.

To get in touch either call our Technical Sales team on **01282 500318**

or email **sales@yourofficeanywhere.co.uk**

Other white papers available:

- Hosted Exchange
- Hosted Servers
- Private Managed Cloud
- Applications Anywhere - RemoteApps and how to get them
- Telephones Anywhere - Hosted Telephony, Voice over IP
- Documents Anywhere - Hosted SharePoint 2013 - OneDrive for Business
- Hosted SQL server
- Access Database Hosting
- Hosted Sage 50 Accounts, Sage 200.
- Hosted Desktop for Charities

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