

Device-as-a-Service Model: Key to Workplace Transformation in the High Tech Industry

Abstract

The emergence of radically new working styles and the need to provide exceptional workplace experiences are compelling organizations in the high tech industry to adopt transformative workplace solutions that cater to today's diverse workforce. Transforming into a mobile and collaborative workplace involves harnessing the latest technological innovations and digital solutions.

Among the trends defining the office of the future is Device-as-a-Service (DaaS). DaaS refers to pieces of hardware that are delivered and managed through their lifecycle for a monthly subscription fee. This relieves an organization of the effort involved in day-to-day hardware support, and allows greater flexibility in managing the workforce and associated resources.

This paper explores the future of DaaS in the High Tech industry. We present a roadmap for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), along with high tech organizations as well as service and platform providers to collaboratively provision intelligent and comprehensive DaaS offerings. Through enriched and value-added services that provide analytical insights into device usage, DaaS can be a potential game changer for high tech players, enabling them to have greater control over their assets as well as costs.

The Days of Corporate Device Ownership are Numbered

Over the last few years, OEMs have begun offering their devices in an 'as-a-service' model. The driving force behind this trend? The need to counter the constant cost pressures that force IT departments to optimize their device usage, reducing their ability to deploy and support the latest digital workplace solutions with agility. Many IT departments also lack the expertise to assess the latest workplace solutions for availability, scalability, security, and other organization specific compliances.

DaaS combines offerings such as PC-as-a-Service (PCaaS), Network Device-as-a-Service (NDaaS) and so on - under one umbrella. It promises to lower costs and enhance cost predictability, while enabling value-added services such as IoT to drive predictive analytical insights and pave the way for enhanced user experience. A 2016 IDC survey¹ indicates that over 43% of the early adopters of PC-as-a-Service are expected to fully transition to the DaaS model within the next three years.

However, Device-as-a-Service must not be confused with Desktop-as-a-Service, which also goes by the same acronym. Desktop-as-a-Service provides a cloud based Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) that is accessible from a wide range of devices such as tablets, thin clients, and smartphones. Desktop-as-a-Service is a secure option for organizations that promote mobile workplace solutions like BYOD. A robust and stable VDI environment will eventually increase the demand for Device-as-a-Service, especially for thin clients.

Why Switch to DaaS: Five Compelling Reasons

How broken is the current device procurement model? Why fix it? Is DaaS the right answer? These are important questions facing organizations that are contemplating switching to DaaS.

A majority of employees perceive their organizations to be slow in recycling outdated devices and adopting new workplace solutions.² The amount of effort associated with traditional device procurement is also one of the major drivers of the DaaS trend. Innovations in the high tech industry around IoT analytics and service-centric supply chains enable DaaS offerings that address the traditional challenges of procurement, deployment,

and management of end user devices. Along with improved user satisfaction, DaaS also effectively enhances an organization's security and compliance management.

The following benefits make a compelling case for DaaS adoption.

Improved cost stability: Accurate visibility into current and future hardware costs that is accounted for as OPEX, instead of CAPEX, enables better control over finances. The enhanced predictability in expenditure gives an organization the flexibility required to redeploy resources towards business priorities.

Simplified device and data management: Organizations are able to outsource end-to-end management of devices to the vendor, including critical aspects such as keeping the hardware current and handling the end-of-device lifecycle tasks such as data migration, clean-up, and safe disposal.

Seamless upsizing and downsizing: The monthly subscription model enables decommissioning and provisioning of assets at the click of a button without the hassles associated with procurement, configuration, and deployment of devices.

Increased IT bandwidth for strategic tasks: DaaS unburdens IT teams of time consuming asset management tasks, enabling them to redirect their focus towards core operations such as continuity planning, risk management, and internal services.

Enhanced eco-friendliness: Managing hardware for multiple customers at global scale equips DaaS vendors with the ability to strictly adhere to environment friendly best practices at a lower cost, thanks to economies of scale. Based on customer demand, DaaS also opens up avenues for reuse of refurbished devices within the organization as well as for philanthropic initiatives.

Maximizing Value from DaaS: Use cases for the High Tech Industry

Steady increase in spending on outsourced hardware is an upcoming trend for the IT function and this is where DaaS will be vying for a major share. As DaaS adoption increases, high tech industry segments such as computer platforms, technology, electronics, and professional service providers have a huge opportunity to develop value added offerings. Currently, many of the value-added services are independently classified as-a-Service. Consolidating them will enable access to a larger data set, enhancing the quality of analytics and insights that can be derived.

Here is a brief overview of the kinds of value-added services high tech companies can create:

- **Proactive device maintenance:** Regular monitoring and collection of data from devices can help businesses proactively maintain device health by identifying and resolving issues, such as a failing battery - before device downtime impacts business continuity. Monitoring hardware performance also helps ensure proactive device upgrades, in turn, delivering a better user experience. For instance, upgrading the RAM on a device for faster processing speed.
- **Analytics-driven device optimization:** A consolidated dashboard can provide valuable analytical insights on the entire device inventory and their health, device usage statistics and more, helping organizations quickly identify idle assets and optimize device deployment. Centralized control coupled with analytics can help drive unlimited possibilities for superior decision making.
- **Proactive monitoring for security vulnerabilities:** The alarming growth in cyber-attacks puts the onus on companies to become more nimble in handling their IT infrastructure and data. DaaS vendors can provide continuous monitoring of security parameters enabling deployment of updates and controls before any harm is caused. Computer platform and service providers with experience in Managed Security Services (MSS) are well poised to integrate their Security-as-a-Service solutions involving deployment and management of intrusion detection systems and firewalls with DaaS.

- **Unified management of devices:** A DaaS vendor can also enable a single portal to manage all devices deployed in an organization, including existing devices at a customer location. Adoption of a standards-based open architecture is key to such seamless connectivity.
- **On-site services:** SLA bound on-premise support structure will greatly influence the adoption of DaaS. DaaS vendors supporting multiple customers bring to the table skilled and efficient location-based 24/7 support, making it a winning proposition.
- **Backup-as-a-Service:** A secure backup solution along with disaster recovery capabilities will be one of the most sought after managed services going forward. Identified devices within the organization can leverage the solution to enable quick restoration and provisioning of a new device while adhering to pre-defined SLAs.
- **Device warranty, insurance, and licenses:** A customized insurance package for devices that guards against accidental theft or damage can greatly reduce hassles for the customer. DaaS offers end-to-end visibility into the device lifecycle coupled with the knowledge of refresh cycles, making warranty management and license renewals a breeze.
- **Regulatory compliance:** Security and integrity of data is largely driven by regulatory bodies and industry standards in certain segments such as pharmaceutical, banking, and financial services. Customized and compliant solutions for data encryption, access control, and key management are some of the offerings provided by DaaS vendors to address the stringent requirements.

Creating Competitive Advantage: Shifting the Focus from Device Management to Value Creation

Today, the focus of high tech companies is on delivering true digital workplace experiences and transformations through high levels of automation. However, the focus will soon shift to enhancing their digital workplace's delivery capabilities and business productivity through DaaS. With time, the device itself will matter less while the analytical and innovative quality of value-added services will become the major source of differentiation and competitive advantage in the industry.

References

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