

VMware View 3 Magnifies Desktop Virtualization

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Abstract: With its recent announcement of VMware View 3, VMware improves its virtual desktop offerings by advancing management, scalability, and end-user experience. The timing of the announcement coincides with challenging economic times, enabling VMware to demonstrate how it can extend the value of virtualization to the massive numbers of endpoints throughout every company.

VMware View: Is it for You?

VMware isn't letting any economic swing stand in the way of delivering desktop environments that are rich in experience, customizable, and have performance characteristics that meet some of the most demanding applications requirements. In fact, VMware is leveraging the economic downturn, using it as an opportunity to deliver new solutions like VMware View 3 to companies that want to regain desktop management control, improve endpoint security, and provide flexible access alternatives for productivity workers. VMware View 3 is the next step in the evolution of solutions currently known as VMware VDI. On December 2, 2008, VMware announced the general availability of VMware View 3, including advances in:

- **Management:** VMware View Manager 3 enables unified monitoring and auditing across terminal servers, blade PCs, and physical PCs. Focused on enhancing the end-user experience, VMware Manager supports multimedia redirection, granular policies for USB redirection, and simplified virtual printing support. VMware ThinApp is also being delivered prepackaged with the View Premier tier to deliver application virtualization with desktop virtualization.
- **Scalability:** VMware View Composer is breaking the bounds of traditional VDI solutions that consumed enormous amounts of storage capacity. View Composer leverages linked clones for a significant reduction in storage costs, quick virtual desktop provisioning, and simplified updating.
- **Personalization:** New Offline Desktop¹ support enables end-users to check their virtual desktops in and out, providing support for mobile workers. Improved multimedia redirection with 3D graphics and codec support on the client is aimed to ensure that the end-user experience is not compromised or limited in any way.

VMware View 3 is available immediately. Prices start at \$150 per concurrent connection with View Enterprise Edition and move up to \$250 per concurrent connection with VMware View 3 Premier Edition. The premier additions include View Composer, Offline Desktop, and ThinApp. VMware's VDI bundle offering has been renamed VMware View Enterprise and its current virtual desktop management solution, VDM, has been renamed VMware View Manager—included with VMware View Enterprise and Premier bundles.

VMware View Expansion Hits Customers' Top Priorities

This announcement is well timed. Customers are looking to decide which desktop virtualization solution to hang the hats on; they need to figure out how they can maximize existing VMware investments. Desktop virtualization has many moving pieces, all of which ultimately contribute to an uncompromised end-user experience. It's difficult to balance an infrastructure to support potentially tens of thousands of users while maintaining an end-user experience that is rich with graphics and even supports current or planned VoIP initiatives. Advances in product functionality, while maintaining the end-user experience, should help VMware drive virtual desktop solutions to the market because:

¹ Experimental in View 3.0

- **VMware customers want to build on current investments.** To maximize ROI benefits, VMware customers should be willing to layer VMware View 3 on top of their existing VMware infrastructure. VMware View plugs in nicely to existing VMware Virtual Infrastructure implementations and utilizes existing training and skill set that extend the benefit and value that virtualization has into the desktop arena. VMware View can leverage the same VMware ESX infrastructure, including mobility, high availability, and data protection strategies. They get one common infrastructure that suits both server and desktop virtualization.
- **Desktop virtualization is driven by the need to improve desktop management.** VMware View Manager addresses desktop management challenges with advances like View Composer that enable administrators to significantly reduce the number of images to manage and maintain. This can help streamline operations during lean times while bolstering security in the process. View Composer also has the added benefit of reducing storage capacity costs, which can be a major limiting actor in virtual desktop deployments.
- **The desktop virtualization market is about to get red-hot.** VMware can take advantage of its virtualization knowledge and expertise to grab a thought leadership position at the endpoint. VMware View 3 should ride on the VMware momentum in the server virtualization space and make the decision to deploy desktop virtualization with VMware a no brainer from both technology and business perspectives. Competitors are already on board, with Citrix and Microsoft mixing up their own special brew. VMware View advancements continue to keep VMware right in the middle of things and ready to deliver an optimal end-user experience.

Virtual Desktop Success Factors

Desktop virtualization and VMware View 3 success or failure depends upon several factors:

1. The end-user experience has to be rock solid and deliver uncompromised performance and accessibility. VMware Offline Desktop is going to help significantly accelerate virtual desktops into many environments where mobility is an important criterion. If users can gain this flexibility without any loss in performance, they will tell their friends. The flexibility of being able to access your customized desktop environment, regardless of device or location, is extremely valuable for a workforce that needs access—and needs now—as nearly half of all working Americans do at least some work from home.²
2. Endpoint device choice cannot become a point of contention. Some companies today are starting to adopt the concept of BYOPC (Bring Your Own PC). The BYOPC concept enables users to purchase from a menu of approved devices and manage and maintain that device on their own. In return, the company will deploy a corporate desktop image to the device, which immediately benefits from improved management and security. It's conceivable that a user can purchase a Mac and the company can deploy a Windows XP image, which completely separates the personal environment from the business environment, potentially eliminating enormous support issues. VMware should embrace BYOPC as a differentiator that adds value to its products.
3. Thin clients cannot be perceived as a downgrade! End-users will continue to have the perception that when IT removes the big honking box full of spinning parts and failure points, they are being downgrading from a technology perspective. Additionally, end-users are already blaming desktop virtualization on performance and access problems that usually have nothing to do with the virtualization solution and can often be tied back to the application itself. This is a slippery slope that requires special consideration before negative feelings about virtual desktop deployment spiral out of control. To help negate some of the resistance, companies are deploying thin clients with dual monitors to show improvement and commitment to the technology. While this may appear to be a bit over the top, companies are finding that it actually has a favorable ROI when looked at over the life span of the thin client.

VMware is in a unique position as the leading server virtualization vendor to capitalize in the desktop virtualization market. To do so, it has to close the gap between the IT operations team that typically runs the server

² PEW Internet and American Life Project

virtualization show and the desktop operations team challenged with management and security issues. Virtual desktop initiatives are typically driven from IT leaders and even company executives. VMware can take its existing relationships and leverage them as an opportunity for customers to do more with their virtualized infrastructure, potentially having an impact that dwarfs anything they have done with server virtualization to date.

The Bottom Line

VMware View 3 is not to be mistaken as a change in VMware's direction or a major rebranding of the company. VMware has had success with its VDI solutions and VMware View is a leap in the right direction that improves both desktop, client, and application virtualization.. VMware is also strategically positioning itself in a fruitful market in a time where IT spending is at risk. Deploying VMware View solutions will help customers control management, reduce security risks, and improve both end-user access and application availability. Centralized management with VMware View Manager enables IT to enforce policies while still maintaining a flexible and productive working environment.

VMware View 3 is only the beginning of things to come. Expect to see VMware extend its management capabilities across virtual, physical, and mobile devices to further enhance the end-user experience and deliver applications that put information at the fingertips of users when it is needed most in new ways. The momentum in the market continues to build and VMware is charging ahead with solutions that improve TCOs and shorten ROIs: the perfect ingredients in today's challenging IT world.