

Supporting Desktop Virtualization in 2012

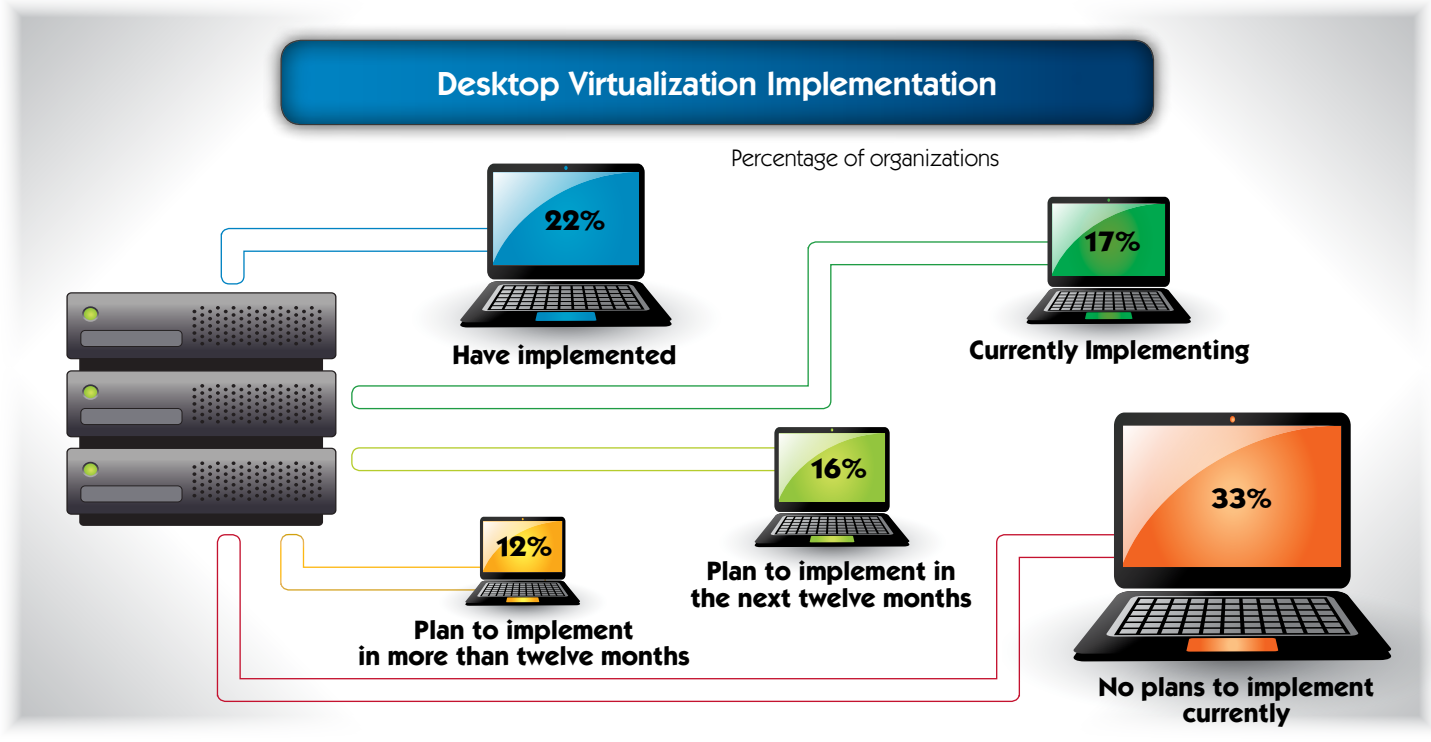
Jenny Rains
Senior Research Analyst, HDI

The PC era is coming to an end. The growth of the mobile workforce, coupled with IT's desire for centralized management and deployment, has compelled organizations to explore innovative solutions. Desktop virtualization—wherein clients use a virtual desktop interface to connect, via a network or the Internet, to an operating system that is located on a server and not on the actual machine—is one of the solutions generating serious interest in the technical support community.

The HDI Research Corner surveyed organizations about their implementations and the extent of desktop virtualization. This report reveals the motivations behind and challenges associated with desktop virtualization, as well as customer satisfaction with the technology as a service. The online survey collected responses from 304 professionals in the technical service and support community from June to August 2012.

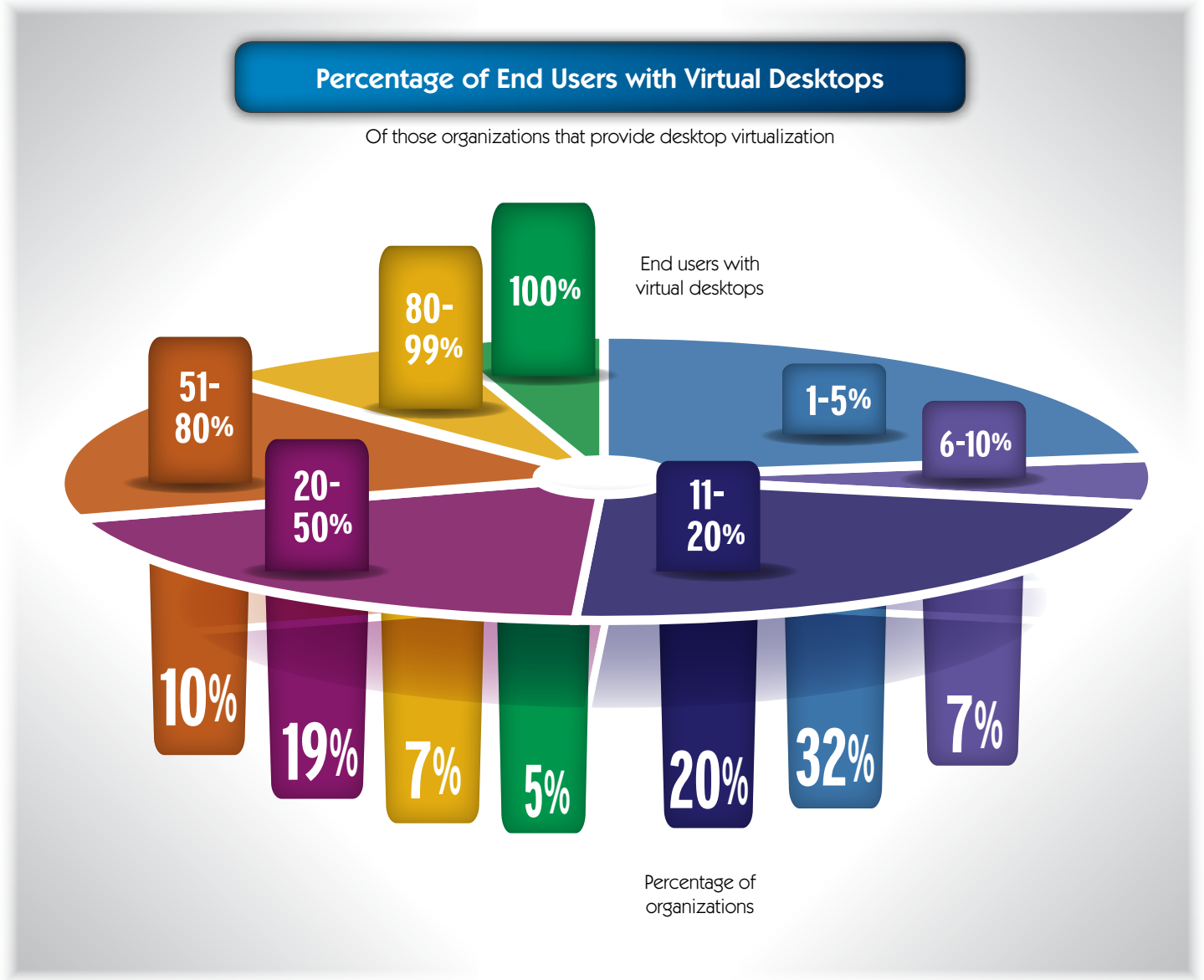
Survey Results

Based on the survey's results, two-thirds of the industry either has implemented or plans to implement desktop virtualization at some level. It is important to note that the respondents who elected to participate in the survey had prior interest in the topic, and that interest likely influenced the results of this particular screening question. It is possible that those who plan to implement desktop virtualization are more interested in learning more about the topic (and were therefore more likely to participate in the survey) than those who have no plans, or those who have already successfully implemented desktop virtualization. The results of this particular question might represent the interested sample more accurately than the total population. The results do, however, accurately depict the discussions and informal polls taking place throughout the HDI community.



While the impact of desktop virtualization appears to be widespread based on the results revealed in the first chart, the following chart provides yet another view. While most organizations have implemented or plan to implement desktop virtualization, those organizations that currently have desktop virtualization available implemented it within a very limited scope.

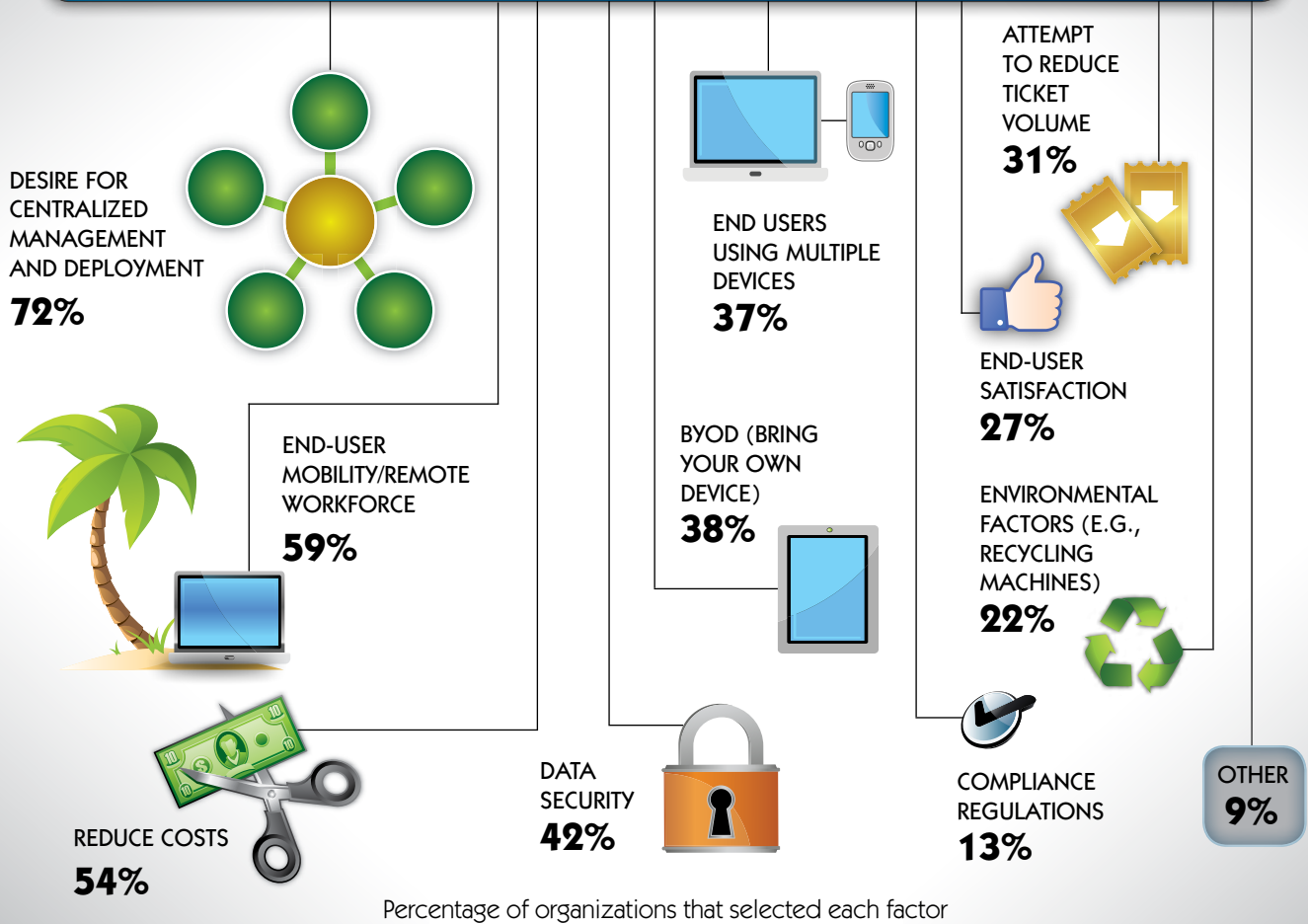
Approximately one-third of organizations who reported that they either have implemented or are implementing desktop virtualization have five percent or fewer of their end users on virtual desktops. The majority of organizations report that desktop virtualization is used by 20 percent or fewer of their end users. So while this solution appears to be gaining traction, it is evident that organizations are practicing small-scale implementation.



Why Desktop Virtualization?

Organizations that either have implemented or are planning to implement desktop virtualization were asked to select the factors that influenced or are influencing their decision. The desire to centralize management and deployment was the front runner; almost three-quarters of organizations selected this as one of their motivating factors. End-user mobility/remote workforce (59%) and reducing costs (54%) were two other leading factors. Desktop virtualization is not, however, an initiative that is being pushed on IT by customers; only 27 percent of organizations reported that end-user satisfaction influenced their decision to implement virtual desktops.

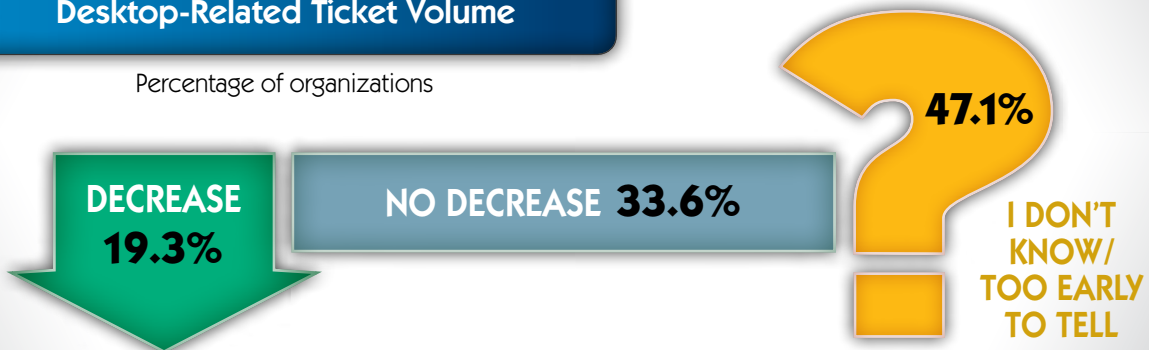
Factors Motivating Organizations to Implement Desktop Virtualization



Thirty-one percent of organizations decided to implement desktop virtualization as a means of reducing ticket volume. Of those that have implemented desktop virtualization, 19 percent have seen a decrease in the number of desktop-related tickets received by their support centers; 34 percent have not seen a decrease, while the remaining 47 percent are either not tracking this metric or report that it is too early to tell.

Influence of Desktop Virtualization on Desktop-Related Ticket Volume

Percentage of organizations



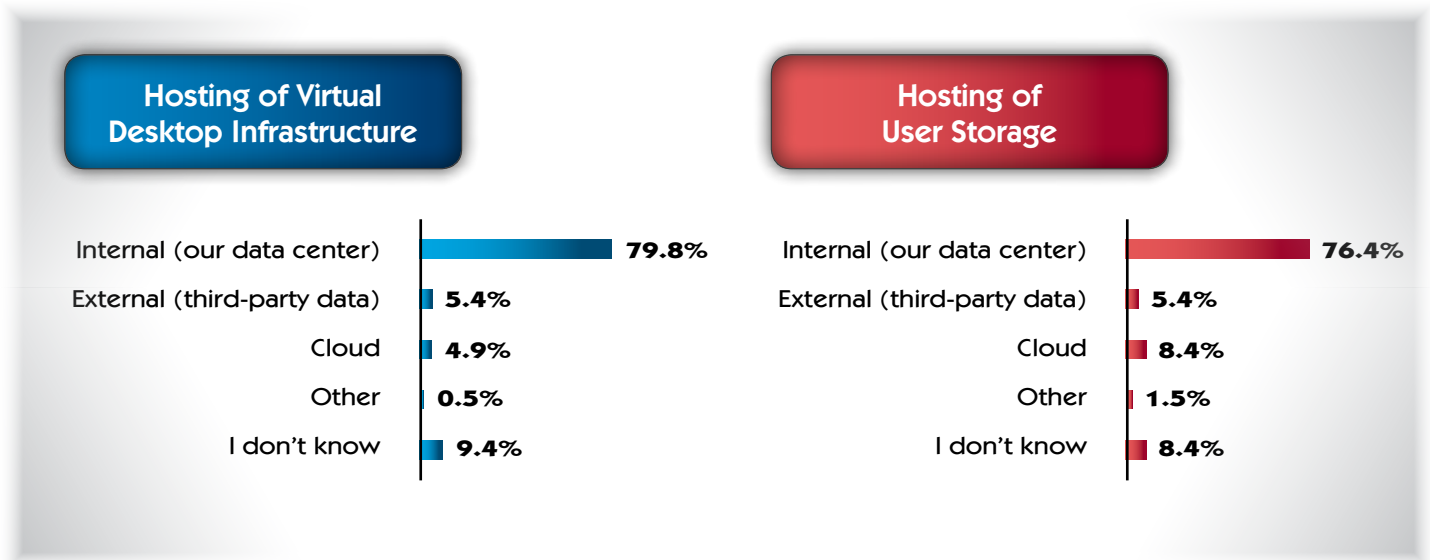
The Technical Side

To determine whether the number of virtual desktops affects the incidence of technical difficulties, those organizations that have implemented desktop virtualization were asked to report the number of virtual desktops they host and whether hosting that many is a challenge. The two largest response sets were the “fewer than 100” (N=19) and “more than 500” (N=20) categories. Thirty-seven percent of the former and 65 percent of the latter report technical challenges with the number of virtual desktops hosted. Because of the low number of responses in each of the other categories, the results are inconclusive as to whether there is a relationship between the number of virtual desktops hosted and the technical challenges encountered. However, 56 percent of all organizations that have implemented desktop virtualization report technical challenges with the number of virtual desktops hosted, regardless of the number of virtual desktops they host.

Number of Virtual Desktops	Percentage of Organizations
Fewer than 100	30%
100-150	10%
151-200	3%
201-250	11%
251-500	14%
More than 500	32%

When asked how these technical challenges were resolved, the most common response was by addressing the capacity required to run virtual desktops. Some used trial and error to address their challenges over time, while several others involved the vendors or other third-party consultants to help resolve their issues. Several organizations reported that they are still having technical challenges that have not yet been addressed.

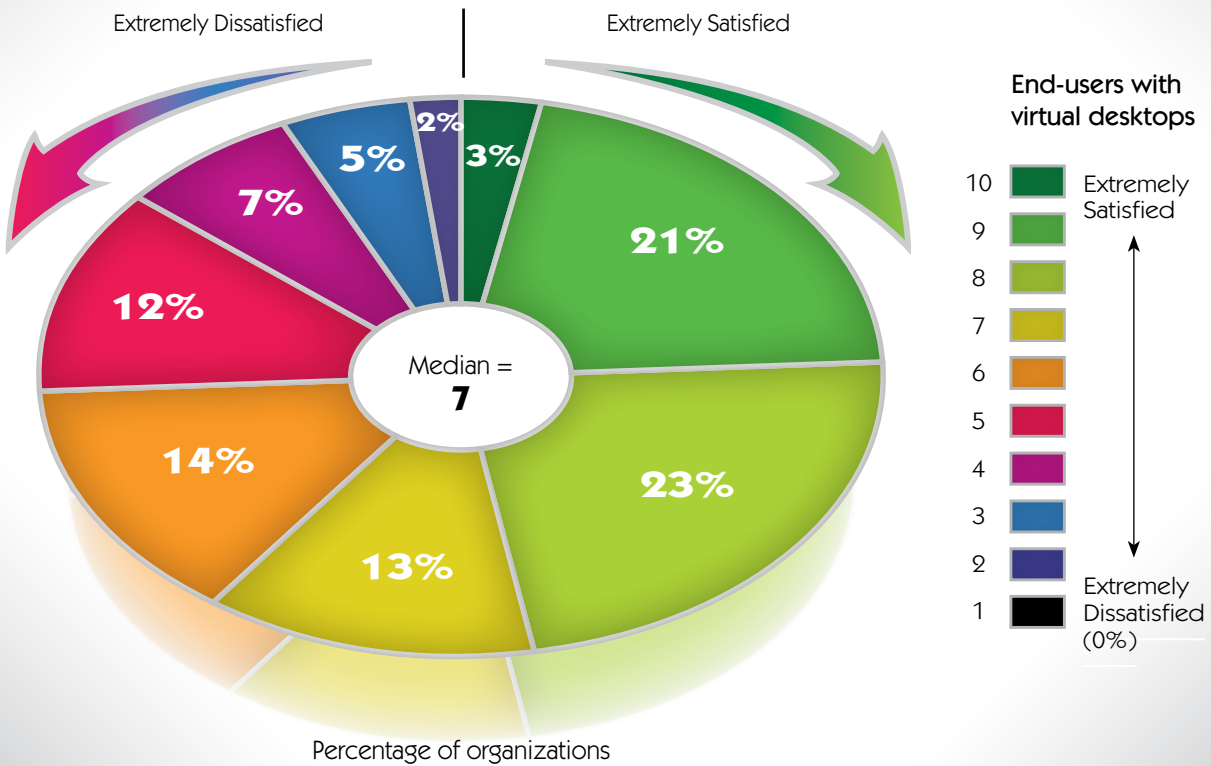
When asked where the virtual desktop infrastructure is today or will be eventually, internally hosted (i.e., within the organization’s data center) was the most common response (80%). This is true for user storage as well (76%).



Customer Satisfaction

While end-user satisfaction is not at the top of the list of key factors that influence the decision to implement desktop virtualization, that should not be taken to mean that end-user satisfaction with the virtual desktop experience is not important. Organizations that have desktop virtualization were asked to rate their end users’ satisfaction with desktop virtualization on a scale from one to ten, where one is “extremely dissatisfied” and ten is “extremely satisfied.” The median score was seven out of ten, with around one-quarter reporting their end users are on the dissatisfied side of neutral.

End-User Satisfaction with Desktop Virtualization



Based on these results, even though the customer is not the reason why organizations pursue desktop virtualization, in general they seem to be fairly satisfied with the experience. With that in mind, there is plenty of room for improvement as the technology evolves and organizations learn more about its requirements and limitations.

GoToAssist

Want the next Research Corner report sent to you? Take the current survey!



For all available HDI Research Corner reports, visit www.ThinkHDI.com/BePartOfTheCorner.

Copyright © 2012 UBM LLC. All rights reserved.