

MODERNISING DESKTOP VIRTUALISATION

Migrating from Citrix to Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD)

Executive Summary

Organisations relying on legacy remote desktop solutions, such as Citrix, face growing challenges. High licensing costs, complex infrastructure, and increasing security requirements make these solutions difficult to maintain and scale, particularly for mid-sized organisations.

Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD), integrated with tools like Nerdio, provides a modern, cost-effective, and scalable alternative. By simplifying management, enhancing security, and optimising costs, AVD empowers organisations to modernise their remote desktop environment, improve employee experience, and enable a seamless, high-performance remote working environment.



The Limits of Traditional VDI

For over two decades, virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) platforms, such as Citrix, have been the backbone of remote access strategies. They provided business continuity and helped employees work from anywhere, long before hybrid work became a mainstream concept. However, the modern workplace has shifted. Today's organisations need platforms that are flexible, secure, and cost-efficient at scale, requirements that traditional VDI solutions are increasingly struggling to meet.

Rising Costs

Legacy VDI platforms often lock organisations into high licensing fees and recurring hardware refresh cycles. Beyond the initial investment, ongoing operational costs continue to increase, making it difficult to forecast IT budgets with confidence.

User Experience Gaps

Employees expect fast, seamless access to applications from any device. Instead, they often face latency, downtime, and inconsistent performance. Poor digital experiences directly impact productivity and employee satisfaction.

Security Risks

Legacy infrastructure was not designed to combat the scale and sophistication of modern cyber threats. Monitoring and maintaining compliance across a growing number of endpoints is difficult, costly, and leaves organisations exposed to unnecessary risk.

Complex Management

Managing a traditional VDI environment requires constant attention from IT teams. Updates, patching, and troubleshooting are time-consuming, pulling skilled staff away from higher-value strategic projects.



A Modern Approach to Remote Desktop Solutions

Legacy remote desktop solutions can no longer keep pace with modern business needs. Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD) offers a cloud-first approach that is secure, scalable, and cost-effective, enabling organisations to modernise their desktop infrastructure and empower their teams.



SCALABILITY ON-DEMAND

AVD lets organisations provision desktops and applications instantly, scaling up or down as business needs change. This flexibility supports hybrid teams and remote work without costly hardware upgrades.



SIMPLIFIED MANAGEMENT

Centralised administration through the Azure portal makes user provisioning, policy management, and application delivery simple. IT teams can reduce operational complexity and focus on strategic initiatives.



ENHANCED SECURITY AND COMPLIANCE

Built-in security features like conditional access, multi-factor authentication, and encryption protect data while meeting industry regulations. Users can work securely without slowing performance.



COST OPTIMISATION

Pay-as-you-go cloud pricing and automated resource management lower operational expenses compared with legacy systems, while maintaining high performance.

Integration with Nerdio

Nerdio Manager for Enterprise is a purpose-built automation platform that simplifies and accelerates AVD deployment and management. It empowers IT teams to reduce complexity, optimise costs, and streamline migration from legacy platforms like Citrix.



Automated Deployment

Nerdio enables rapid provisioning of desktops and applications with minimal manual configuration. IT teams can deploy full AVD environments in hours, not days.



Centralised Management

Manage users, session hosts, policies, and scaling rules from a single pane of glass. Integration with Microsoft Intune and Entra ID ensures seamless identity and device management.



Cost Optimisation

Nerdio's intelligent auto-scaling and scheduling features reduce infrastructure costs by up to 30%. Resources are dynamically allocated based on usage patterns.



Accelerated Migration

Tools for image conversion, FSLogix profile migration, and session host creation simplify the transition from Citrix or other legacy platforms.

cubesys' Expertise

cubesys is a Microsoft Solution Partner and Nerdio Platinum Partner with deep expertise in AVD. With over 100 successful AVD projects, cubesys helps mid-sized organisations modernise their desktop infrastructure with speed and precision.



Planning & Assessment

Using tools like Azure Migrate, Lakeside, and Nerdio, cubesys evaluates current infrastructure and identifies cost-saving opportunities. The cubesys' Economic Assessment framework builds a business case in just 3 days.




Deployment & Migration

cubesys executes migrations in weeks—not months. Their proven methodology includes persona-based workspace design, rapid proof-of-concept, and seamless production rollout.



Ongoing Support

Managed AVD services include optimisation, governance, and end-user support. Transparent, effort-based pricing ensures predictable costs.

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Case Study | 2025

UNITING NSW.ACT FUELS GROWTH AND DELIVERS RELIABLE, COMPASSIONATE CARE WITH AZURE VIRTUAL DESKTOP

Customer: Uniting NSW.ACT
Industry: Non-profit organisations
Size: 10,000+ employees
Country: Australia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uniting NSW.ACT delivers vital services in Australia, from early education to elder care to mental health support. Yet its underperforming, aging, and costly data centre constantly interrupts workers' jobs and impedes growth.

After a successful pilot, Uniting worked with Microsoft partner cubesys to transition business-critical applications to AVD. The pivot allowed Uniting to exit an expiring on-premise setup, consolidate, and avoid an expensive data centre rebuild.

Constant uptime of apps ensures staff can help clients. Using Nerdio with AVD saves the nonprofit 60% on daily usage cloud costs. With the flexibility of the Microsoft Cloud, Uniting is poised to grow to meet growing demand for services.



Image Credit: Uniting NSW.ACT

In an early learning program run by Uniting NSW.ACT, preschoolers roll, mash, and mould colourful clay. In another corner of the room, children bring their imaginations to life on the easel—getting almost as much paint on the paper as they do on their smocks. Other youngsters play with plastic dinosaurs and kangaroos, giggling at the silly scene.

“I’m looking for a good future and a good life for my kids,” says Dr Efaw Eva Mohammed, a parent from South West Sydney whose son attends a Uniting early learning program. When she first immigrated to Australia, she struggled to navigate unfamiliar education, immunisation, and childcare subsidy systems. Uniting staff helped her jump through the necessary hoops and enrol in a nearby early learning program. “[They] are like keys to the treasure for my child,” she says.

Mohammad and her son are just two examples of the 145,000 people Uniting serves every year across New South Wales and the federal district, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Through elder and home care, mental health services, family reunification, foster carers support, independent living properties, early education, and more, Uniting helps create a better future for individuals, families, and communities.

Given Australia's aging population, as well as increased demand for in-home care and mental health services, Uniting is growing to ensure even more people have access to its compassionate offerings. "We at Uniting have a scalable model. As the technology group within Uniting, we get everyone up and running quickly. Our infrastructure and processes help our programs disrupt entrenched disadvantage," says Elo Falck, Senior Manager of Cloud Transformation Services at Uniting NSW.ACT.

Unfortunately, the nonprofit's legacy infrastructure and on-premise data centre created speed bumps for Uniting's commitment to delivering its warm, responsive care throughout the region. Overburdened, end-of-life on-prem servers caused frustrating delays for staff and frontline workers. Increasing maintenance costs pressured Uniting's budget.

The expiration of its data centre agreement would have necessitated a costly reinvestment in new on-prem infrastructure. And leadership questioned if continuing down the data centre path was the right strategic move, given the opportunities of AI and the cloud.

Uniting collaborated with Microsoft partner cubesys to modernise its critical workloads. AVD now empowers a mix of in-person and remote staff to securely deliver a wide variety of human services without aggravating disruptions. The flexibility of Azure enables Uniting's technology team to address issues and take advantage of opportunities. AVD is also saving the nonprofit money, allowing it to reinvest in mission-driving projects.

"The implementation of Azure Virtual Desktop has been a game-changer for us. The transition was seamless, and the support from cubesys was exceptional," says Falck. "We're really making the connection between technology and helping the community."

SWITCHING TO THE CLOUD ON A DEADLINE

When Uniting learned the organisation would have to exit its on-premise primary data centre within a year, it needed to pivot. Meanwhile, the on-prem server delivery system constantly caused business applications to freeze or crash. Staff flooded the help desk with tickets to reboot their applications. Workers sometimes spent hours a day trying to work around unresponsive applications—all with the root cause of an underperforming server infrastructure.



Image Credit: Uniting NSW.ACT

The disruptions hobbled frontline workers, who need business applications to record client notes, answer customer questions, send communications, and more. “Our people need to be able to open client records in a timely manner, and the system just wasn’t letting them do it,” remembers Sharyn Oswald, Client Systems Management Lead at Uniting NSW.ACT.

While Uniting originally planned to move to another data centre, it turned to cubesys to develop and evaluate an Azure Virtual Desktop proof of concept. Funded by the Microsoft Azure Migration and Modernisation Program, cubesys supported Uniting to build an AVD pilot within Uniting’s new Azure landing zone. The pilot deployed AVD and two major Uniting applications to a limited number of users to validate extensive user and performance testing.

The AVD pilot quickly demonstrated technical fit. Business users immediately noticed improvements to their daily work. With this foundation, a business-IT alliance advocated for an organisation-wide adoption of AVD.

Fast-tracked collaboration with cubesys led to a full deployment and on-time delivery without disruption of services. With a green light from Uniting’s leadership, cubesys designed and implemented a production AVD environment, oversaw the switch, and provided support as operations adjusted to the deployment.

“You could really tell cubesys had done over 100 implementations. They delivered everything within our tight timeframe,” Falck says. “It was really refreshing to work with both cubesys and Microsoft.”

MAINTAINING RELIABLE UPTIME FOR CONSISTENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Change management for the switch to AVD was pleasantly straightforward, Falck recalls. The icon users clicked to access their computer workspaces looked different, but everything else remained the same—except performance. Frontline workers immediately noticed the dramatic improvements in uptime, reliability, and speed, and service desk tickets dropped exponentially. For instance, logging in now takes one-sixth of the time with AVD. Those minutes, multiplied across thousands of employees, add up to significant productivity gains.

“Customer issues were sorted, and staff ratings of the change were fantastic. We took that information to the CEO, so it was a top-to-bottom success,” Falck says.

Clients and customers have a better experience, too. The old server system used to freeze in everyday situations, such as checking a client’s address or upcoming appointments, which caused waits as staff sessions were reset. When a customer is seeking help to avoid homelessness, continue living independently at home, or provide a safe home to a child in the foster system, responsiveness is critical. AVD enables staff to reliably offer immediate support and focus on their primary responsibilities of caring for customers.

Azure Virtual Desktop's reliable uptime for vital business applications also allows frontline workers to record care notes without interruption. System searches that used to take minutes now yield results in a few seconds. Advanced searches used to paralyse apps and require an IT reset, but now workers have this functionality at their fingertips. Staff used to keep handwritten notes to avoid constantly freezing apps, "but now they type in all their case notes, confident that the app won't crash on them," Oswald says. This results in more comprehensive records that inform ongoing care and services, and it improves regulatory compliance.

AVD provides this seamless experience, regardless of workers' location. Staff working in the field, at home, or in the office can all spend more time and energy delivering support to the community. "Now people are focusing on their customers versus dealing with administration and system issues," Falck says. "In short, AVD helps our staff help our customers."

SAVING COSTS TO FOCUS ON THE MISSION

Every mission-driven organisation has a responsibility to make the best use of its funds to maximise its impact. The Microsoft Cloud supports Uniting's commitment to do just that.

As the nonprofit transitioned away from its on-premise infrastructure, it decommissioned redundant, outdated solutions. Transitioning away from its increasingly expensive data centres fully funded the switch to Azure. Further, the change eliminated the costly maintenance of legacy infrastructure.

Azure provides new transparency into the IT budget. On the recommendation of cubesys, Uniting layered the virtual desktop management solution Nerdio onto AVD. Nerdio tools provide insights into usage peaks and lulls to simplify performance and cost optimisation decisions. For example, Nerdio visualisations showed upticks in business application usage on Friday afternoons and the end of the month, when many staff catch up on administrative tasks like client notes. Nerdio scales up Cloud server capacity during high-demand times and scales down during low usage, such as overnight.

Nerdio and AVD working together save Uniting 60% on daily usage costs. "We optimise costs without ever sacrificing someone's ability to do their job," Falck says. "That concern is solved by working with good partners like cubesys, Microsoft, and Nerdio."

GAINING FLEXIBILITY TO SCALE IN THE CLOUD

The speed and relative ease of moving from an AVD pilot to full production emphasise the flexibility of the Microsoft Cloud. Any significant changes in on-premise server capacity used to take both ample planning and significant budget, but now Uniting has the freedom to make nimble adjustments to strategy and execution.

For example, when Uniting realised that remote contract workers' performance was lagging because of routine downtime issues from non-managed servers, Uniting enabled virtual desktops for this team. Even though this step was not on the original project roadmap, “it was a quick pivot because we already knew how to deploy Azure Virtual Desktop,” Falck says. “We could easily solve the problem by removing the cost associated with them not being able to perform their jobs.”

Azure’s pay-as-you-go scalability enables Uniting to adapt to changing needs. For example, they can seamlessly roll out AVD for hundreds of new workers when they acquire an organisation or open a new line of business.

Uniting IT staff are freed up to create value-adding solutions, such as a new Azure-based generative AI-powered digital assistant that helps staff answer procedural and operational questions. “Simplified management processes have reduced the burden on Uniting’s IT team, allowing them to dedicate more time to strategic initiatives that directly support the organisation’s mission,” says Astha Singh, Marketing Lead at cubesys. “This efficiency ensures their technology not only runs smoothly but also contributes to delivering better services to the people and communities they serve.”

Falck agrees. “The cubesys-Uniting-Microsoft collaboration paves the way for transformative change,” he says. “Together, we’re demonstrating how technology can be a force for good, enabling organisations to focus on what truly matters—making a difference in people’s lives.”



Escape Citrix Lock-In. Go Live with AVD — Fast.

cubesys helps you migrate, uplift, and operationalise with speed and confidence.



Citrix's licensing model is rigid and expensive. cubesys helps you rapidly transition to Microsoft AVD with a secure, scalable production build — backed by automation, cyber uplift, and deep migration expertise.

“The implementation of Azure Virtual Desktop has been a game-changer... support from cubesys was exceptional.”

Elo Falck, Senior Manager Cloud Transformation Services, Uniting NSW.ACT

What You'll Get

- Rapid Citrix-to-AVD migration
- Secure production deployment
- Cyber uplift and governance
- End-user onboarding and change management
- Cost control and cloud spend visibility
- Pathway to hyper-care or full managed service



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