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Windows 7 Migration

Analyzing internal vs. external deployment strategies and associated costs

[Lane F. Cooper, Editorial Director, BizTechReports]

With the 2014 retirement of Windows XP on the horizon, enterprises and government agencies are intensifying Windows 7 migration initiatives. Most organizations will start the process by choosing one of two approaches: internally managed or third party-managed migration.

To help enterprises make an informed decision about which approach to pursue, this document identifies the phases associated with an enterprisewide migration strategy and estimates the time and costs associated with successfully concluding each step.

More than a dozen experts reviewed the migration steps and cost analysis against their (and their customers') experiences. Expert reviewers included:

- Enterprise IT executives in the private and public sector
- Independent consultants who are advising enterprise clients on Windows 7 migration strategies
- Systems integrators who are engaged in actual migration projects
- Microsoft Corp. sources

Additionally, industry analyst reports on this topic and input from InformationWeek contributing editors involved in computer lab evaluation informed the structure and content of this analysis.

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Per 1000 PCs	Step Description	Internally Managed Migration Deployment			Third Party-Managed Migration Deployment		
		Time (Staff Hours)	Note	Cost* (Staff Hours @ $75/hour)	Time*	Note	Cost*
Initial Assessment	• Survey desktop environment using "light touch" (partly automated) and "zero touch" (fully automated) methodologies • Assess current state of hardware and software configurations • Analyze results	8		$600	8		$600
Discovery	• Perform granular analysis using light-touch or zero touch methodologies and tools such as: – Microsoft Assessment Planning Toolkit – Microsoft Deployment Toolkit 2010 – Wake (imaging) – Application Compatibility Toolkit – Microsoft System Center (Zero Touch)	400	This analysis covers every machine in population and yields an accurate estimate of PCs against active software licenses and their status.	$30,000	150		$11,250
Planning	• Map desktop requirements to strategic, operational and technological imperatives, such as: – Known plans for organic expansion, mergers or contraction – Evolving mix of office, home-office, hybrid (telework) and mobile workforce (prioritize workforce based on performance and mission criticality) – Application lockdown opportunities and so on	600	Planning costs do not rise symmetrically with the number of PCs; the numbers listed here are fixed costs for 1000 seats or more.	$45,000	320		$24,000
Application inventory, rationalization, testing and remediation	• Test all applications; between 40% and 60% of all applications will require some sort of remediation NOTE: Most companies have an application count higher than they realize.	300	This cost is based on the average number of applications in mid- to large-size enterprises.	$22,500	135		$10,125
Staging	• Stage image to target the platform (32-bit or 64-bit or both); processor assessment should be based on current needs, installed hardware base and future plans • Implement at least a two-stage process: – Build a base image for enterprise-wide deployment. – Provide a sub-staging process for departments to further configure PCs based on an enterprise catalog of approved applications available from a centrally controlled resource • Define distribution points and develop protocols or steps for how these points download images and subimages from the central organization	200	Based on distribution and number of images and subimages. Assumption: two images (one for 32 and one for 64) and 10 distribution points. Subimage configuration at departmental level would be additional.	$15,000	120	Knowledge of toolsets is very valuable.	$9,000

		Internally Managed Migration Deployment			Third Party-Managed Migration Deployment		
End-User Training	• Live online training tailored to specific organizational contexts • On-demand online training • Live in-house classroom training • Video libraries are available online from Microsoft and partners.	2,000	NOTE: End-user training for two-hour curriculum broken up into 30-minute segments. Cost for 1,000 seats estimated at $95/per seat/per hour This estimate includes curriculum development and departmental customization.	$190,000	2,000	NOTE: Leveraging existing courseware, it is estimated that trusted third-party implementers can reduce this cost to a total of: $80/per seat/per hour This includes curriculum development and depart-mental	$160,000
Enterprise Rollout	• Execute a sandbox rollout to test staged environment • Testbed of 100-200 desktops is initially recommended • Identify any unexpected anomalies • Make adjustments • Determine whether changes need to be made to images • Run testbeds in increasingly larger scales until anomalies are ironed out • Proceed to full deployment.	60	Most of the hours (40) will be allocated to the testing and vetting phases. Once critical mass is reached, enterprise-wide deployment per 1,000 machines takes the remaining 20 hours.	$4,500	38		$2,850
TOTAL		3,268		$307,600	2,731		$217,825

Bottom-Line Results

The numbers in the analysis show that the cost associated with the internal execution of a Windows 7 migration strategy for 1,000 enterprise personal computers is $307,600. This figure represents hard costs only, and does not take into account the opportunity costs associated with temporarily reallocating resources from projects that would normally occupy a full-time-equivalent (FTE) employee.

In contrast, an identical migration initiative executed by a knowledgeable and experienced third-party partner would cost $217,825, to yield $89,775 — or 29 percent — savings over internally deployed initiatives. The difference in cost can be attributed to:

• Significantly higher levels of experience based on executing multiple migrations per year
• Development of mature management process
• Expert understanding of how to use low-touch and zero-touch tools
• Streamlined training development platforms

Now, will every migration play out exactly as this analysis describes? Each expert consulted emphasized that no two migrations are alike. Keep in mind that the numbers presented are estimates and are subject to the complexity levels of specific environments, the availability of expertise within the enterprise and the quality of partners selected to implement these projects. These numbers serve as a realistic decision-making guide, but should be evaluated and adjusted to each organization's actual situation.

That said, the numbers show that tapping an experienced third party can shorten the time a Windows 7 migration takes and can reduce the associated costs, while also freeing in-house IT staff to focus on other initiatives. ●

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