



CITRIX DESKTOP VIRTUALISATION



WORK FROM ANYWHERE

The NWU has put considerable effort into establishing a facility which delivers virtual Desktops pre-loaded with relevant software to allow uninterrupted work on almost any modern device - a PC, tablet or even smartphone - with an internet connection, at any time.

1

For students this means that Lab applications are accessible on their own devices wherever they are any time of the day or night, both on campus and remotely. These applications can be accessed when students launch the 'Lab Desktop' found after logging in on the Citrix platform.

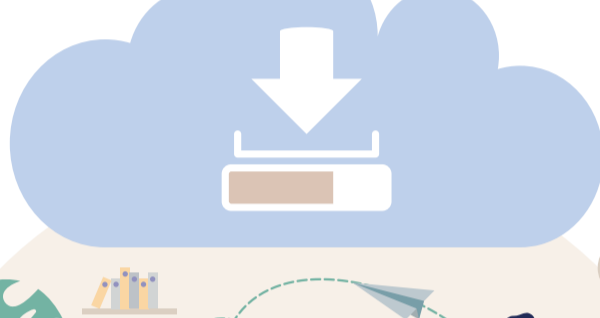
2

Staff have access to the 'Staff Desktop - Multi Session' virtual desktop through which they can use general purpose applications such as MS Office and GroupWise, as well as network drives or any other resource which is accessible only on campus.

3

There are also special case virtual desktops which have been prepared for specific user groups such as students from Computer Science collaborating on projects, and VSS users spending the largest part of their day working on that system in the virtual environment.

SAVING AND PERSISTENCE



1

With the virtual desktops multiple users share the same computing resources, and as such the user experience is similar to working in the physical computer labs which restores to a default state after a reboot. One notable exception to this however is the users' 'Documents' folder. Files and directories created in the Documents folder on the virtual desktop is persistent and will 'follow' the user between sessions, meaning that it is possible to save data on the virtual desktop and continue working on it later using any of the applications loaded on the desktop.

2

Depending on the device used to access the virtual machine, files can also be transferred back and forth between the client device and virtual machine with ease.

3

Many peripherals such as webcams, scanners, digital pens and 3d mice should also work in the virtual environment.

LOCKDOWN AND ZERO RATING



1

Phase 1 of the Lab Virtualisation project would have seen it be deployed only to a number of physical computer labs across the NWU campuses by the 20th of April 2020, but when the Lockdown was implemented the focus shifted to quickly delivering the service to students - and staff - now having to work from home. Home devices may not have been geared towards productivity, but through the delivery of the virtual desktops - which runs stable on relatively low bandwidth (3G) connections - many users were able to remain productive under difficult circumstances.

2

The Citrix platform was also negotiated to be one of the zero-rated services offered to students.

LINKS TO SERVICE



1

Read more about how to get started using this service on the NWU IT Service Catalogue:

<http://services.nwu.ac.za/it-service-catalogue/pc-lab-virtualisation>