

A photograph of a man in a library, seen from the side, using a public computer. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The man is wearing glasses and a dark vest over a light-colored shirt. He is standing at a desk with two computer monitors. The background shows bookshelves filled with books and other patrons in the distance.

Public Computing

A Guide to Improving Your Library's Public Computing

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Libraries around the world provide patrons with public access to technology everyday. However, as the demand for digital resources quickly climbs, many libraries struggle to provide proper public computer access without going over budget.

This leads us to ask, what is the alternative option to the traditional and costly desktop PC per seat solution? Desktop virtualization allows your library to easily deploy more public access computers with less hardware, less maintenance, less money, and greater control over the desktop experience.

Library Technology Landscape

According to the a Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study*, libraries have a vital purpose in the U.S. and provide their communities with essential public access technologies. When a library is not able to properly afford or maintain public computing, its patrons and its community are missing out on crucial services.

However, the traditional one PC per workstation solution presents a challenge. Deploying an individual PC for every public access station means more hardware and software licensing, which results in higher upfront costs. In addition, each PC creates increased ongoing costs in maintenance and software updates, usually requiring an expensive IT team to sustain it. More PCs also means more electricity is consumed.

The public computers deployed in libraries have multiple users sitting down at them at different times throughout the day. This presents a variety of unique challenges that are not properly addressed by traditional computing solutions. Extra software needs to be added on top of the standard desktop to lock it down in order to ensure a consistent and high quality experience. Add on software is needed to clean up unwanted files to protect privacy, to manage time spent to ensure equitable access, and to filter internet access as needed. Adding these extra features usually creates additional work for administrators who must install, manage and update each desktop. This results in public computers with an extremely high total cost of ownership.

Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study (United States)

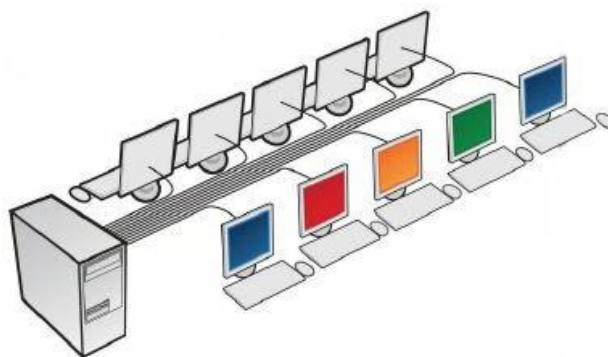
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Desktop virtualization enables libraries to power up to 10 unique desktops through one, central PC.

The Solution

What can libraries do to solve their public computing woes? The answer is desktop virtualization. This alternative enables libraries to power multiple public desktops from one PC. It eliminates much of the complexity and cost that usually results from the traditional PC-based solution.

There are many virtualization solutions available, but Useful Desktop is specifically designed for libraries to uniquely blend virtualization with public computing needs. It's a fully integrated solution from one vendor, that drastically cuts library costs.

Instead of buying 10 separate PCs, your library can power up to 10 individual desktops from one standard PC. This means managing all computers centrally and relying on complete updates through the cloud.

Better Patron Experience

Patrons will also benefit from the seamless switch to desktop virtualization. Useful software is designed with patrons in mind, and it comes with integrated features to please everyone. The software has numerous customizable applications available to help patrons accomplish their goals. Some applications are age appropriate, such as fun and educational games for kids and large print options for seniors or those with disabilities. Libraries can also deploy job-seeking stations with office applications, links to job banks, and more.

Some other options include time and print management, so patrons can have timed computing sessions and printing options at certain workstations. You can also set up pre-booking stations for patrons to reserve a desktop for a certain time and to ensure everyone has access to the proper technology. Desktops can be configured with free open source office applications or Microsoft Office suite.

Userful also enables you to equip your library with digital signs and self-service kiosks. Patrons will love the improved computing power and they will love that it is a green computing solution, saving up to 80% in electricity and eliminating much of the traditional hardware waste.

Save Complexity and Cost

Userful is a simple solution. Set up and manage computers with one, easy to use technology. Useful fits everyone's public computing needs with fully integrated features, all managed by Useful through the cloud. The out-of-the-box setup doesn't require expert IT staff and is simple enough for any library employee to quickly get started.



Patrons will enjoy the enhanced quality and many features of Useful Desktop virtualization software.



Userful provides an all-in-one solution from a single vendor, saving libraries money in both upfront and ongoing costs.

All public workstations are also locked-down and include privacy protection for patrons. Staff can manage security settings on each individual desktop to meet the needs of the library. It's an easy solution that will relieve you of any prior public computing headaches.

Budget-Friendly

Everyone likes saving money and staying under budget. Userful reduces your total cost of ownership and eliminates many of the ongoing costs that come with traditional PC solutions. Desktops are connected through zero client devices that only require three watts of power, cutting your library's hardware and electricity costs. The virtualized setup also means reduced space needed for PCs and cables.

Time is money, and desktop virtualization cuts your maintenance time drastically. With simple setup prevent computer maintenance headaches. This also means there is no need to hire expensive IT teams to install and maintain your computing system.

Open source software and Microsoft Office options reduce your software licensing fees. Libraries don't have to pay separately for antivirus, operating system, or features like lock-down and reservations. Userful provides an all-in-one solution, providing more advantages than are seen with traditional desktop solutions.

Making the Switch

So, why make the switch to desktop virtualization?

It's simple, cost-effective and provides an enhanced experience for patrons. Userful's virtualization software is the best choice when it comes to a fully integrated system for the greatest value.

Libraries and the public computer access they provide are essential to the community. All too often old, worn-out PCs are just not cutting it. The switch to desktop virtualization is easy, and with it, Userful enables libraries to spend more time helping patrons, and less time worrying about computers.

Learn more: About Userful please call **1.866.873.9010**, or visit **userful.com/public-computing**.