# Comparison Microsoft Remote Desktop Services vs. Citrix Xenapp

# 1. Comparison Microsoft Remote Desktop Services versus Citrix Xenapp

## 1.1. Presentation and delivery of applications

• With Citrix XenApp you can publish applications in a very easy way with a central console.
• With MS RDS you need to publish applications on each MS RDS server separately, no easy central administration is available.

## 1.2. Web access to applications

• With Citrix Xenapp you can use a component called Citrix Web Interface. With the Citrix Web Interface Console you can easily configure access to Citrix published Apps.
• With MS RDS you can use RD Web Access, with very basic options.

## 1.3. Server farm configuration and user session load balancing

• With Citrix Xenapp you create a real server farm. All servers are connected to a central enterprise-level database which is responsible for storing static configuration data.
• With MS RDS you can use a RD Connection Broker to create some sort of "farm" experience (All RD Session Host servers belong to the same group).

## 1.4. Secure remote access

• With Citrix Xenapp you can use a component called Citrix access gateway, which is a separate appliance that is used to enable secure remote access to the Citrix Xenapp farm. This solution is very easy to implement, enables easy high availability and gives great performance.
• With MS RDS you can use RD Gateway to enable secure RDP connections. This solution is a bit harder to implement as you also need to define the correct CAP and RAP policies.

## 1.5. Printing

• Citrix Xenapp allows the user to map on the fly any existing printers and have them be available in the session without requiring the user to log off and log on to use the printer.
Citrix Xenapp provides client-side printing support through the Enhanced MetaFile (EMF) print format without requiring a printer driver to be installed on the server.
• With MS RDS, printing options are very basic and not that advanced and innovative as the Citrix printing solution.

## 1.6. Management of environment

• With Citrix Xenapp you can use one console to manage your Citrix environment. All configuration is done in the Citrix console and delegation of control can be used by adding or removing servers from a group.
• With MS RDS there is no real central console. This is a huge shortcoming as you have to maintain RD RemoteApps on each server separately and you don't have a central overview of your farm setup. You can have limited central management of your user sessions, but you have to create manually a group of all your RD session hosts servers or import from the RD connection broker.

### 1.7. <u>Advanced end user experience</u>

- Citrix Xenapp has advanced roaming user support. Citrix SmoothRoaming ensures that applications and data move with your users as they change locations, networks, or devices, so they can pick up exactly where they left off, without interruption. Citrix Xenapp allows applications to appear automatically in the start menu or on the local desktop providing a familiar application access experience for users.

  Citrix Xenapp supports USB webcams, scanners and can use MS activesync to sync with client devices. Citrix Xenapp uses a technology called session reliability: When a network connection issue occurs, the application window remains visible on the client device and the client continues to accept keystrokes and mouse movement from the user while session re-connection is attempted in the background. For transient network issues, such as where users roam between wireless "hot spots", the user may not even know connectivity was lost.
- MS RDS only support automated appearance of icons on desktop or start menu when using windows 7 client or when RD RemoteApps are distributed via MSI's.

### 1.10<u>. Client software</u>

- Citrix Xenapp has a broad client support. There is integrated support for a lot of client platforms: All Windows x86 and x64 platforms, Macintosh platforms, Apple iPhone, Google Android, Windows mobile, java platforms, EPOC/Symbian platforms and UNIX/LINUX platforms.
- MS RDS only supports the client on Windows x86 and x64 platforms. Limited support is available for Macintosh clients.
  A lot of RDS features require the Windows 7 RDS client and are not available on Windows XP and Windows Vista clients.

### 2.11. <u>Enhanced multimedia and audio support</u>

- Citrix Xenapp uses enhanced Audio Codecs which provides CD quality audio using a very small amount of bandwidth. Support for Voice over IP softphones within server- based sessions. Support for Video Conferencing in Hosted Sessions is available which enables the ability to use video conferencing applications within server hosted sessions.
- MS RDS has no enhanced multimedia and audio support. Performance and end user experience of multimedia applications within an RDP session are mainly poor.

### 2.12. <u>Monitoring of environment</u>

- Citrix Xenapp include Citrix monitoring software, called EdgeSight. EdgeSight monitors applications, devices, sessions, license usage, and the network in real time, allowing users to quickly analyze, resolve, and proactively prevent problems.
- MS RDS has no monitoring software included in the Remote Desktop services package. MS SCOM can be used at an extra price, but it does not supply enhanced monitoring tasks such as end-to-end monitoring.

## 3. <u>Reference</u>

The following articles have been used as reference to help writing this document:

- Citrix Xenapp on Microsoft Remote Desktop Services: Feature Analysis
  http://www.citrix.com/site/resources/dynamic/salesdocs/XenApp6onRDS.pdf
- Is Windows Server 2008 R2 Terminal Services a Citrix Killer?
  http://blog.xcentric.com/2009/08/04/is-windows-server-2008-r2-terminal-servicesa-citrix-killer/
- Do you need Citrix or is Terminal Server enough?
  http://www.brianmadden.com/blogs/brianmadden/archive/2005/09/20/do-youneed-citrix-or-is-terminal-server-enough.aspx