

# The Digital Work Showdown: Modern Cloud vs Legacy Server

The demand for flexible remote working infrastructure and solutions has increased dramatically in recent years. Azure Virtual Desktop and Remote Desktop Services are both popular desktop virtualisation technologies on the market, facilitating remote access to essential business resources. However, they do differ significantly in terms of infrastructure, deployment, management and more. So, which solution is right for your business?

## Technical terms to know:

### Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD)

Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD) is a desktop and application virtualisation service that runs in the Azure Cloud. Accessible via the internet from any compatible device, it harnesses Windows Desktop to provide a user experience almost identical to that of office working.

#### Modern Cloud



#### Deployment/ Infrastructure

AVD can be Windows Server or Client-based

'Evergreen' – always the latest underlying technologies

Management Plane managed by Microsoft

Instant deployment



#### Licensing

Microsoft 365 Business Premium (or higher) provides all the licensing you need to use AVD



#### Scalability

Scale up/down as needed

AVD can be scaled dynamically up or down depending on usage requirements

### Remote Desktop Services (RDS)

Remote Desktop Services (RDS) is a platform for building virtualisation solutions, including desktops and applications, via Windows Server or the Cloud. You can set up your RDS solution for virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI).

#### Legacy Server



#### Deployment/ Infrastructure

RDS is WindowsServer-based

Requires upfront purchasing of physical servers, software and networking hardware

Complicated deployment and management

Long delivery times



#### Licensing

RDS requires you to purchase Windows Server licensing and separate Server, RDS and Microsoft Office CALs



#### Scalability

Difficult to scale

RDS is typically built and licensed to accommodate the maximum number of users to use the solution, making it more difficult to scale in future

Requires planning for additional users with hardware/software purchases



## Integrations

Azure Active Directory (Azure AD) integration allows you to bring the security features of M365 to your desktop

Key productivity applications such as OneDrive and Microsoft Teams are integrated into AVD

AVD is a full Windows 10/11 desktop experience

AVD can also be run on-premises or in a hybrid configuration using Azure Stack HCI



## Monitoring and management

The AVD backplane is managed by Microsoft

Integrated Azure backup solutions

AVD has both native and third-party monitoring functions, making issue identification/resolution more efficient



## Cost-effectiveness

Flexible consumption-based PAYG pricing that helps cost containment (OPEX cost)

AVD is a cost-effective way of providing a secure Remote Desktop and Remote App experience from virtually anywhere and from any device

With existing Microsoft 365 Business Premium subscriptions, there are no additional licensing or management overhead costs and does not require costly on-premises infrastructure



## Security

AVD brings together Microsoft 365 and Azure Active Directory to provide fully integrated security such as Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) and Conditional Access (CA)

Integrates seamlessly with Microsoft Defender of Cloud



## Integrations

OneDrive and Teams are not optimised for Windows server and not installed by default

RDS provides a Windows 10 “desktop experience” via a Microsoft Windows Server

Microsoft 365 Apps not supported on the latest version of Windows Server OS

Support for M365 Apps is ending in Oct 2025 for earlier versions of Windows Server



## Monitoring and management

RDS is fully managed by your IT Provider, typically using 3rd party remote monitoring and management tools (RMM)

Expensive 3rd Party backup software required



## Cost-effectiveness

Large upfront investment (CAPEX cost)

RDS requires the purchasing and continual maintenance of physical infrastructures



## Security

RDS has more limited security features  
Securing the environment is your responsibility

# Azure Virtual Desktop: supporting the era of remote work

With so many businesses adopting a Cloud-empowered approach to modern work, Azure Virtual Desktop has a competitive edge over Remote Desktop Services. As well as being a cost-efficient, scalable and flexible virtualisation solution, AVD facilitates secure remote and hybrid work.

To get started with your Azure Virtual Desktop deployment, get in touch with our experts at Arbelos. Your journey into the Cloud begins today.

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