



For years, MSPs (Managed Service Providers) have been instrumental in deploying and maintaining the networks of organizations in the Small-to-Medium-Sized Business (SMB) segment. By helping to leverage economies of scale to deliver high value IT services to its customers, MSPs traditionally act as a liaison between IT vendors and the SMB customers that need their services.

Managed service providers

MSPs help organizations to focus on their business, by supporting the server, desktop, and network infrastructure for multiple customers, MSPs are able to achieve economies of scale and ultimately deliver more value to end-customers. Their customers range from SMBs, nonprofit organizations, to mid-sector companies and government agencies, and their range of services vary from server infrastructure to networks, security, monitoring, and end user computing.

The MSPs model is an evolutionary improvement over the break-fix model, which is most easily understood as a transition from reactive to proactive service delivery. The proactive approach has allowed MSPs to deliver elevated levels of availability, security, general flexibility, and ease of use of at price points SMB's could never support on their own. However, as the pressure of addressing cyber-security issues along with the governance, risk management and compliance (GRC), comes to bear on the SMB market, these things are collectively putting significant pressure on the price and delivery models for MSPs. Not since the transition to proactive services has the MSP industry faced a period of significant and necessary transition like the one it is currently at the beginning of.

MainFrameIT

MainFrameIT, LLC was launched in 2008 and began helping SMB customers benefit from a bit of the original 'mainframe' concept, only instead with Microsoft Windows PCs/servers/networks all running centrally from the cloud. Customers were liberated from having to purchase and maintain heavy infrastructure such as servers and all the tech, expense and headaches that went along with them. Staff were no longer shackled to a single PC as each user "Windows" was able to follow them from PC to PC to Mac to device resulting in a workforce that was more agile, more mobile and more productive. Clients with multiple locations and/or remote staff could work as if all were in one office in the cloud.

Today's MainFrameIT moves organizations from SMB IT model delivery models to an Enterprise, Continuous Service Improvement (CSI) model capable of addressing the insurance, GRC and Security requirements of SMBs at price points they can afford. MainFrameIT's in-house developed platform enables it to move client data, servers, and applications, with near-zero disruption, to client-owned private networks in Microsoft data centers. Perhaps most importantly, the MainFrameIT model all but eliminates the security, compliance and regulatory risks imposed by today's Work-From-Home workforce. Based out of Princeton, New Jersey, MainFrameIT supports clients in over 14 states.

Paradigm shifts driven by COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19 and the post-pandemic era forced a paradigm shift in terms of how employees work. Organizations now have requirements to provide users uncompromised secure access to their desktops and applications from anywhere, at any time, on any device. Customers are choosing, and staff is demanding, they be able to work from anywhere, while meeting organizational requirements that productivity be maintained with staff working across disparate work environments, uncertain economic conditions, and public health crises.

While most workplaces had already transitioned certain workloads towards cloud-native / cloud-centric solutions, the pandemic imposed numerous challenges on MSPs that had to accept most office desktops and laptops would be moved from secure office networks to insecure home user networks. Worse still, MSPs suddenly had pathways from most of an organization's machines, now on insecure networks, back to the secure office network environments – threat actors rejoiced. Too much company data now lives in unmanaged, insecure networks, networks that in manifold ways expose organizations to risk. The only solution to solving problems like 'where data is located' and ensuring threat actors can't pass through VPN connected work-from-home machines, is MSP's must shift end-user computing environments (desktops), including data, out of employee homes and public Wi-Fi locations, to private networks in the cloud that most staff work in regardless of physical location. While it's been possible to achieve this for quite some time, between the challenges of Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) costs and understanding the manifold complexities surrounding implementation and management of secure remote desktop networks, most MSPs have been challenged to deliver the right offerings at the right price points. While private cloud networks accessed with cloud desktops have always been MainFrameIT's primary delivery model, it has long desired a way to deliver maximum isolation for clients in Microsoft Azure data centers, however the variable costs and complexities of Azure have until now, kept it out of the budgetary reach of most SMBs.

Spot PC – Managed cloud desktops solution from Spot by NetApp

Spot PC is a managed, secure and continuously optimized cloud desktop solution from Spot, that runs on Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD) and Microsoft Windows 365 Cloud PC. It is easy to deploy and is offered at a competitive fixed price, per-user, on a month-to-month agreement. It's managed by VDI experts at NetApp as a managed service, where NetApp manages the key aspects of deploying, managing and supporting the back end of AVD cloud desktops environments, so that MSPs can focus on what they do best; assisting clients with digital transformation and preparing for the tectonic changes GRC will impose on the industry.

MainFrameIT: “Spot PC is Game Changer”



James White, President & CEO of MainFrameIT:

I've been trying to think back over the years, taking inventory of the comparatively few 'game changer' technologies such as storage area networks, virtualization, Microsoft 365 and Azure, each of which allowed IT to move past the limits of its day... Spot PC is without question such a game changer, and from MSPs to mid-tier enterprise, there is much to love about Spot PC. In all candor, I've not been this excited about a new technology in quite a while.

Compared to other platforms we manage clients with every day, Spot PC is breathtakingly easy. Starting with seamless login via SSO where partners can impose MFA with rigorous conditional access requirements, to being able to move between servers, users and statistics with ease, Spot PC is a tough act to follow. Configuration, deployment, billing and licensing are frictionless as well.

Spot PC makes it simple for MSPs by offloading all the deployment, management, and billing liabilities required to deploy AVD infrastructure, empowering them to offer desktops natively from cloud. Spot PC leverages best-in-class Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop and Azure infrastructure like storage, backup and networking, at a fixed monthly cost per user, which empowers MSPs to ascertain pricing and margin with high reliability.



James White, President & CEO – MainFrameIT:

Spot PC's patented technology drives Azure spend down 50+%, and this coupled with predictable fixed-fee Azure costs helps us deliver significant value to clients in ways never before possible. With included upgrades to Azure NetApp Files (ANF) in Spot PC, coupled with an ever-increasing list of platform automation additions, Spot PC is in a category all its own. NetApp's VDI team is 100% focused on just the VDI layer, replacing the need for us to staff the expertise necessary to build and maintain AVD environments.

For many MSPs, Microsoft Azure is a promising solution at first until they quickly learn its complex to manage, offers no multi-tenancy capabilities, and is difficult to make margin with. Azure's isolated tenancy and technical depth tend to draw in an MSP's staff, thereby imposing highly variable and difficult to measure COGS. Variable and unpredictable billing makes it next to impossible for MSPs to offer it as a fixed price solution – on the Azure side of the Microsoft cloud, the simplicity of cloud is too often just out of reach. By embracing Spot PC, MainFrameIT has been able to control and understand delivery costs and focus resources on higher value customer facing initiatives. Spot PC's user onboarding, support and operations made their end user computing business radically simple.

The future holds many challenges for MSPs

For decades, MSP's have built their comparatively unregulated business models atop every layer of IT imaginable; this is changing fast, however. Adjusting service delivery to address GRC means MSPs will need to shift clients to a model that promotes risk mitigation first, while adding innovative new service layers on top of that.



James White, President & CEO – MainFrameIT:

GRC will push the limits of the traditional MSP delivery model in which MSPs support disparate environments within client premise networks, many of which are hybrid connected to the cloud. We believe the economies of scale required to address a GRC future can only be built with partners like Microsoft and NetApp soaking up large portions of the requirements and the technical work to satisfy them, allowing us to focus on an ever-expanding list of requirements within a consistent yet scalable infrastructure across clients.

Scale and consistency will be critical in a GRC world

With GRC being imposed on MSP customers, enterprise solutions like Spot PC which combine both technology and service will be critical in helping MSPs control delivery costs, ensure profitability, and empower them to deliver outstanding outcomes to end customers of all sizes.



James White, President & CEO – MainFrameIT:

Putting aside Spot PC's many patented advantages, NetApp is a 30-year Silicon Valley cloud and storage services titan, so whether you're servicing a client with 5 users in a single state, or 1,800 users across four regions globally, NetApp is the only vendor capable empowering partners to service clients of all sizes from a single platform. When the use of FSLogix containers pushes the IOPs limits of AVD over the edge, automatic upgrades to Azure NetApp Files at 50 users ensures partners aren't boxed into a corner, and for global deployments, they're the only player in the AVD space with an Azure storage solutions catalogue capable of addressing the unique needs of global clients as well. By retooling our own desktop/machine provisioning/auditing/hardening platform to be compatible with Spot PC, the possibilities are seemingly endless.

To know more about Spot PC and how it can transform your end user computing business, go to www.spot.io/products/spotpc or read the [Spot PC Product Overview](#)