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Maximizing the Value and Performance of QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions with Remote Desktop Services

Formerly known as Windows Terminal Services, Remote Desktop Services is a proven technology that can help businesses reduce costs and save time.

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QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions is a powerful, easy-to-use financial management system. Growing businesses find QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions advantageous because of its ability to support up to 30 simultaneous users and handle large amounts of data and transactions. Less commonly known is that QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions works with Remote Desktop Services (RDS) to provide even more convenience for larger companies with multiple employees working in QuickBooks.

RDS is a technology that offers an efficient and cost-effective way to provide multiple users access to shared applications and data files. When used with QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions, RDS allows businesses to install QuickBooks on a server where authorized users can access the application at any time inside or outside of the office—without ever having to install QuickBooks on individual computers. This setup has five major benefits that help businesses save time and money.

What is Remote Desktop Services?

Remote Desktop Services (RDS) is a technology offered by Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2¹ that allows multiple users to access applications, data or virtual desktops located on a central server. This technology was formerly known as “Terminal Services” in Windows Server 2003 and is now one part of a greater set of virtualization technologies offered by RDS.

Intuit has taken advantage of RDS to make it easier for businesses to extend QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions to multiple users. With RDS, administrators only need to install QuickBooks once in order to make it available for use by multiple users on multiple machines. Up to 30 users, depending on the number of QuickBooks licenses purchased, can work with a company data file at the same time, without conflicts or delays.

A user interacts with QuickBooks via RDS the same way as if it were installed locally. Client software on the user’s personal computer, called Remote Desktop Connection, allows the user to log in to the server to establish a session. QuickBooks can then be accessed through a web page, icon or an access point within the Start Menu on the user’s PC and used remotely. The user’s computer displays images of the application from the server and sends back keystrokes and mouse selections to the server where they are processed. Users experience much higher performance levels because they are utilizing the server’s scalable processing capabilities.

Five Reasons Why Businesses Use Remote Desktop Services with QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions

Remote Desktop Services can offer powerful benefits, enabling businesses to maximize the value and performance of their QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions application.

1. Streamline IT Services

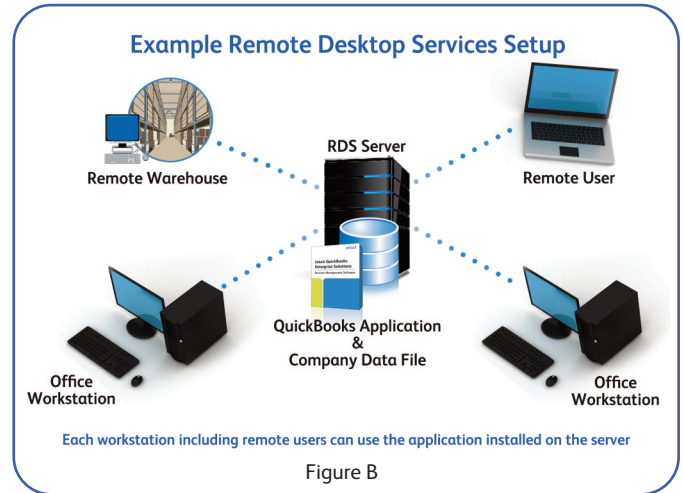
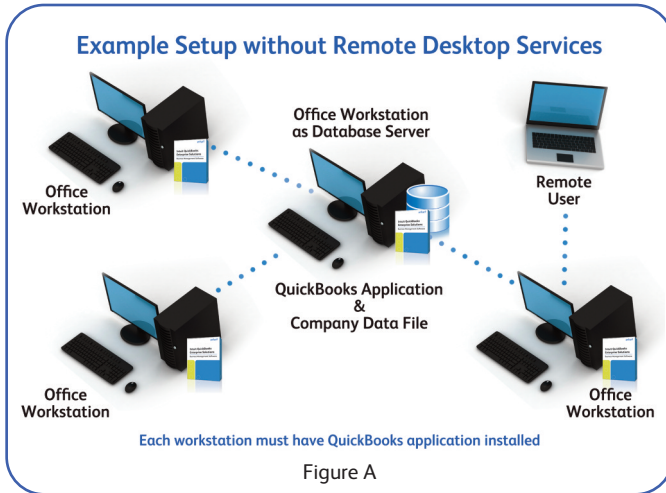
RDS simplifies QuickBooks setup and maintenance requirements. To start, system administrators can quickly give users access to QuickBooks by installing and configuring it one time on a server with RDS. Subsequent software updates only need to be performed on one computer as well.

As another benefit, Microsoft and third party developers provide Remote Desktop Connection client software for most operating systems, including Mac OS, Linux and older versions of Windows. This means a business can make use of its existing hardware and operating systems even though QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions is designed to be installed on personal computers running Microsoft Windows XP (Server Pack 2), Windows Vista or Windows 7. As a result, businesses can save on IT infrastructure costs since computer hardware and operating systems will not need to be changed or upgraded as frequently.

Furthermore, complementary applications such as Adobe Acrobat and Microsoft Excel can also be provided on the same server so that users can easily access other applications they need when working with QuickBooks.

“The key benefit of Remote Desktop Services is that there’s only one machine to manage for multiple users to access locally or remotely. The remote aspect is important because everyone needs remote access today. There’s no reason to buy workstations that just sit in the office and do one thing. That’s just a waste of money. For the cost of three or four workstations, you can have a server.”

Andrew Abrams, Executive Director and Co-founder of Technology In A Box



2. Faster, more reliable performance

Put simply, QuickBooks running on a network using RDS outperforms those that don't.

In a network that doesn't utilize RDS, the QuickBooks company data file sits on either a dedicated file server or a workstation, which is referred to as the database server. Each computer at which a user needs to use QuickBooks must have its own copy of the QuickBooks application installed and be connected to the database server in order to access the company data file. Work done on QuickBooks data on any one computer must be transferred between that computer and the database server to be reintegrated with the data file. When a single computer or connection is sluggish, processing time is delayed for everyone while the server waits for commands entered by each computer in the network to be completed sequentially. In this type of setup, the network speed is constrained by the slowest computer or the slowest connection. (See Figure A.)

In a setup with RDS, the QuickBooks application and company data file are both located on the server; individual user's computers do not need a copy of the QuickBooks application installed. Users log directly into the server, where the QuickBooks application is executed and commands are carried out. Because only keystrokes and mouse movements are needed from a user's computer, the amount of data being sent through the network is minuscule. Processing speed is no longer determined by the slowest computer or connection speed because actions are centrally prioritized to allow everyone to work at their own pace. In this type of setup, RDS can also speed up application performance when users connect through wireless networks. And because the data always stays on the server, work will not be lost even if the connection is broken while a user is working in QuickBooks through RDS. (See Figure B.)

3. Better and more cost-effective remote access

RDS allows QuickBooks users to work anywhere: in the office, on the road, from a satellite office, or from home. Alternative remote access services offer similar capabilities, but users often find them to be slow. Compared to these, RDS requires a much smaller amount of data to be relayed, so QuickBooks performance is optimized even in low-bandwidth scenarios.

These remote access services also usually require a designated workstation in the office for each remote user to connect to. When a workstation is accessed remotely, no one else in the office can use it. Fortunately, RDS makes it possible to provide remote access to multiple employees using one shared server, so there are no tied up workstations.

4. Enhanced security

Protecting sensitive financial data is important for all businesses. RDS provides additional security to a business using QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions. To begin, system administrators must grant specific levels of access to each user who can log into the server. The system administrator can determine which applications on the server are available to each employee. This means several employees may be given access to the server for other purposes but QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions can be restricted to only those who need to use it. Furthermore, QuickBooks administrators also establish application level permissions to specify which functions individual QuickBooks users can access and the type of access they should have, such as view-only, create, modify, delete and print.

With RDS, companies are able to further reduce the risk of data being lost or stolen. Each user must log in to establish a session with the server. Subsequently, QuickBooks data is never directly transmitted outside the server, and therefore, chances of it being intercepted are lowered. Also, because the data resides on the server, compromised laptops should not contain copies of the company data file.

5. More control

RDS gives system administrators more control over QuickBooks. The application and company data file are maintained in an environment only accessible by administrators.

Administrators also have the ability to view who is logged into the server and end a session if necessary so other users can access QuickBooks. For example, if an organization with a 5-user license already has 5-users logged in but one remote user becomes unresponsive, the administrator can easily end this session to allow another user to log in.

Setting up Remote Desktop Services

Many businesses find RDS relatively easy to set up. For those who want expert help, Intuit Solution Providers can provide on-site assistance with procuring the appropriate hardware and licenses and configuration of the server for RDS². They can also offer their expertise in installing QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions. If your business has an IT department, they often already have the necessary experience and skills to implement RDS. If not, many retail stores that sell servers also provide such services.

Next Steps

For more information about QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions and Remote Desktop Services, call (888)236-9501 to speak with a Sales Consultant.

Try Virtualization to Save More Money

When using RDS to provide access to QuickBooks, you need a server to host the QuickBooks application and company data file. But servers are also useful for other purposes, such as email hosting and file sharing. Rather than purchasing servers for each application, savvy organizations are buying one machine and using virtualization to create several virtual server instances to fulfill their various needs. Included for free with Windows Server 2008 R2 and Windows Server 2008, virtualization technology helps companies make the most of their servers.

So when deciding whether or not to use RDS, keep in mind that it's possible the server needed for RDS could also be leveraged for other applications. It may even be enough to support much, if not all, of your business applications.

Suggested Server Specifications

Recommended Total RAM

1-5 simultaneous users	2 GB
5-10 simultaneous users	3 GB
10-15 simultaneous users	4-6 GB
15-30 simultaneous users	4-8 GB

Disk Space

Minimum free space	1 GB
Microsoft Windows Internet Explorer 7.0 or above	70 MB
Microsoft .NET Framework 1.1	150 MB

¹Remote Desktop Services is available with Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2. In Windows Server 2008 and Windows Server 2003, the technology described is referred to as Windows Terminal Services. Microsoft, Windows and Windows Server are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and in other countries.

²Use of QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions with Remote Desktop Services requires certain hardware, Microsoft Server operating systems, Microsoft Windows Server software licenses, and RDS Server Client Access Licenses, which are not included with the QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions product and must be procured separately.

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