How Technology is Helping Keep Asia's Economies on Track During a Time of Unprecedented Disruption

Article by: Matt Young is SVP and Head of Asia Pacific and Japan, Nutanix

As Asia's businesses struggle with series of social, political and natural disturbances, how to manage and maintain operations when staff are forced to work and be productive as a result of their inability to make it to the office is becoming an increasing, and all too regular, concern.

The challenge for Asia is that despite, once again becoming the centre of the global economy, it is still prone to instability and disruption, both natural and man-made. The convergence of some of the most dynamic and concentrated economies in the world, is now regularly offset by the fact we reside in one of the most naturally turbulent and unpredictable regions in the world.

Volatility – a new norm

So, for many companies in Asia, business resilience and continuity, once an afterthought, is now a priority.

The recent disturbances in Hong Kong, bushfires in Australia, and the ongoing Coronavirus outbreak across Asia and beyond, have left many businesses struggling to cope with employees who are physically unable to make it to the office yet still required to be "present" and productive for the business by their employers.

Technology steps up in time of need:

As millions of people remain isolated across the region, the pivotal role of technology, and how it helps keep the world's economic engine running has been pushed into the spotlight.

Over the past few turbulent months, a range of software, solutions and applications have ensured that prescient Asian businesses have managed to continue operating while navigating the recent unpredictability and uncertainty.

Without a doubt cloud technology has helped. The adoption of public, private and hybrid cloud services has meant that the access to, and availability of, critical data has been maintained.

At the same time, the transition from hardware-based to software defined infrastructure has meant that physical access to datacentres is no longer required and central operations can be handled remotely or by a skeleton staff. Thus, the heart of many organisations has continued pumping.

A truly mobile workforce

VDI (Virtual Desktop Infrastructure) and DaaS (Desktop as a Service) are perfect examples of how technology is keeping Asia's businesses running. VDI is a cloud-hosted desktop normally located in an on-site datacentre and operated and maintained by in-house IT personnel.

The advantages are it provides the ability to customise and control the on-site hardware and environment – ideal for companies with highly sensitive data. The flexible infrastructure can also be easily expanded in small steps. Ideal in the face of unforeseen, increased demand – such as we have seen with the recent unpredictable events.

But, the true benefit for the enterprise is that it provides mobility and flexibility for personnel without compromising business security, productivity or performance. It lets staff work from anywhere, on any device with secure and complete access to their work desktop, files and network.

At the height of the Hong Kong unrest, the city's financial giants used VDI to maximise the safety of their staff, avoiding unpredictable and hazardous commutes, allowing them to operate safely and securely at peak capacity.

DaaS on the hand is a fully outsourced solution providing a virtual desktop. It neither relies on, nor consumes, any internal hardware. It provides the same flexibility, safety, security and access as VDI – but it is fully handled by a third party and hosted on their cloud.

The intelligent enterprise

VDI and DaaS have grown to embody the intelligent enterprise. Not only have they become critical for business resilience and continuity, they also provide benefits to digital enterprises during less volatile times:

• efficiency: as a centralised resource they are single systems to troubleshot and a single upgrade or patch. As they consume less bandwidth they help reduce power and save energy.

• flexibility: users can access their workstations and company data from anywhere on any device

• security: with a single server, data is more secure and easier to protect and upgrade. They also provide the ability to restrict access to certain users so any compromise can be swiftly isolated – ensuring network integrity

Finally, for VDI, recent improvements have also made it more accessible and attractive for more

organisations by reducing the time, effort, and cost of setting up the infrastructure.

It is a software based future:

Together VDI and DaaS models provide Asia's businesses with a simple and accessible option for ensuring their staff remain as productive and efficient no matter where they are physically located. And the two models look set to become central pillars of the region's continuity strategy as businesses seek to mitigate future risk and disruption.

However, what of those less fortunate businesses? Those caught with a workforce isolated from the office and unable to work. Well, there is relief at hand.

Well, as VDI and DaaS are cloud based solutions, virtual workspaces for teams, customers, or partners can usually be up and running in under an hour. Isolated staff can then have safe and secure access to any application simply from their home web browser, with no software download or upgrade required. It's almost as simple as point and click.

For Asia's intelligent businesses, their prudent approach in a volatile region is already paying dividends.

For the rest of the region's companies, the sooner we all embrace the modern tools we require to keep our staff mobile and productive, our business resilient to disruption, and our economies growing in turbulent times, the sooner we will cement the region's pivotal role. It's up to all of us to ensure Asia continues to lead the global economy for the next century.