

Switching from Citrix to AVD with Nerdio

A business guide to making the move



Introduction

Many enterprises are looking to Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD) as a modern, enterprise-ready solution to future-proof their virtual desktop strategy and digital transformation.

Faced with unsustainable Citrix cost increases, business leaders are feeling pressure to make the switch, but their IT departments may be hesitant due to a lack of experience with AVD.

This guide takes a close look at the issues, making the business case for AVD in conjunction with Nerdio as the best answer to the Citrix challenge.



Why move to AVD?

As cloud adoption continues to increase, Microsoft's rapid pace of development is creating an incentive for IT leaders to rethink their reliance on Citrix.

Citrix is a well-known vendor in desktop virtualization, but it is no longer the undisputed leader. We have reached an inflection point in the market, and Microsoft solutions such as AVD and Windows 365 have become leading virtualization contenders. According to a 2023 Gartner Magic Quadrant report on desktop as a service (DaaS) solutions, Microsoft has clearly surpassed Citrix in its ability to deliver and its vision for the future of DaaS.

However, the reasons to move to Microsoft are not solely technology-related. The Gartner Magic Quadrant report specifically calls out Citrix licensing and pricing as an important source of customer dissatisfaction. Costs have risen, and the support experience has changed due to the evolution of the Citrix business model, putting pressure on the business to change course:

- Support costs have increased dramatically for some customers, but there are continual changes and uncertainty with customer support and account management.
- Smaller enterprise customers are no longer supported directly by Citrix itself, raising questions of quality, accountability, responsiveness, and access.




Rapid uptake of AVD


From the very beginning, AVD adoption has grown strongly according to a survey of 500 IT professionals.

Less than a year after Microsoft rolled out AVD:

26%
of surveyed enterprises had to put AVD into production



58%
expected to roll AVD out within two years



Overcoming barriers to AVD adoption

IT leaders may be hesitant to switch from the Citrix platform they know and have invested in over to AVD, questioning its suitability for their needs and what it will take to manage the new environment.

Question 1: Is AVD up to the task?

Microsoft has been actively developing its virtualized desktop solutions, including AVD and Windows 365.

Today, these platforms are fully enterprise-ready, as evidenced by widespread adoption in organizations of all sizes.

Points to consider:

- **Cloud, on-premises, or hybrid?:** For industries where information security is mission-critical, hybrid environments are seen as a priority, and may have considered hybrid deployment to be an argument in favor of Citrix. But as of mid-2023, this is no longer a point of difference: Microsoft has introduced Azure Local (formerly Azure Stack HCI), a hyper-converged hybrid environment that combines on-premises infrastructure with Azure Cloud Services. This technology promises to be a game-changer and is evidence of Microsoft's commitment to virtualization.
- **User experience:** For the vast majority of virtual desktop admins, the AVD user experience when properly configured—something made far easier with Nerdio—holds up well when the two environments are compared side-by-side.
- **Compatibility:** Application compatibility is always a moving target; this is true whether it's a commercial application or one developed in-house. Compatibility issues related to cloud deployment will require reworking regardless of the desktop virtualization platform. Microsoft has an advantage here given the depth and extent of the Windows ecosystem—a strength specifically identified in the September 2023 Gartner Magic Quadrant DaaS report.

Question 2: What about resilience?

Keeping desktops online is a key concern for any organization running virtualized environments. The ability to distribute workloads and keep them secure has long been a Citrix selling point—but it can be a high-cost way to achieve resiliency if a fully automated failover that transitions workloads in real time is needed.

Points to consider:

- **Disaster recovery:** The Azure Cloud is spread across more than 60 regions around the world. AVD allows users to set up a host pool that distributes workloads across them to provide disaster recovery. Using AVD's native tools to do so can be relatively complex, but Nerdio makes it simple. Additionally, the arrival of Azure Local makes hybrid cloud a reality for AVD users.
- **Native security:** All essential elements of security are provided by AVD, including host pool copy/paste restrictions, data download control, and limits on moving data. Nerdio makes setting these up simple and accessible—and also provides tight access control to the management console itself.

Question 3: Will AVD with Nerdio really save my organization money?

The issue of cost has many dimensions. In addition to license subscription and support fees, there are the costs of cloud resource use and time spent managing the environment. The total cost of ownership needs to be considered to make a true comparison.

**Reducing Azure
spending with Nerdio**

Up to **80% lower cost** with Nerdio Auto-Scaling compared to native AVD management.

Points to consider:

- **What you're paying for:** Citrix comes at a premium (and increasing) price far higher than AVD with Nerdio. Its feature set is broad, and enterprises must pay for all of it whether they need it or not. Additionally, the Citrix fees are charged on top of AVD. Moving to or consolidating on AVD eliminates that expense, and adding Nerdio to simplify management is far less costly than using Citrix to accomplish the same tasks.
- **Ability to optimize IT spend:** Nerdio makes paying only for the resources actually used easier by offering clear, real-time visibility into cost-per-user along with the ability to minimize it autonomously using the Auto-Scaling feature.
- **The value-add of IT expertise:** Some IT professionals have built a career on becoming Citrix experts and are understandably concerned about being made redundant in a move off of the platform. The expertise, knowledge, and skills they've acquired still apply to AVD. At the same time, the simplicity of Nerdio offers a new opportunity for them. By dramatically streamlining AVD management, the time and expertise that they have been devoting to routine tasks can be redirected to work on more important projects, such as development, governance, and data security.

Question 4: What's the most efficient way to manage AVD?

Nerdio is built exclusively with and for Microsoft's technology stack in partnership with Microsoft. Nerdio tools are highly automated, simple, and accessible, with low resource overhead and low cost—and they're tightly focused on AVD configuration, management, and optimization.

Nerdio also provides a better alternative to the costly, complex, and time-consuming use of DevOps pipelines that are the most common way of managing AVD natively. Nerdio delivers the best of both worlds: simpler than native AVD management and less expensive than Citrix.

Citrix was complicated. I could throw a level 1 tech at Nerdio and he could understand it in an afternoon. The transition to Nerdio was seamless."

– IT Manager, M Holland

Points to consider:

- **Task simplification at scale:** Nerdio's highly automated console and help desk tools are designed to support thousands of AVD desktops. This translates into dramatic time savings and more effective optimization: A fully functional environment can be stood up with Nerdio Manager for Enterprise in just two hours, which is markedly faster and easier than a full Citrix deployment. Nerdio also simplifies complex AVD configuration tasks, such as workload regionalization, and streamlines rollouts of updates and patches.
- **Visibility into the environment and resource use:** Nerdio surfaces key metrics that are highly relevant to the business in a clear and accessible way, such as resource usage and cost-per-user. This enables the enterprise to apply chargeback policies accurately. Nerdio Auto-Scaling also dynamically manages cloud use, ensuring that the business only pays for what it consumes, while IT managers can easily allocate resources as needed.
- **Need for expertise:** Native AVD management via DevOps pipelines can be inefficient, requiring extensive involvement from knowledgeable IT staff. By automating and simplifying many essential tasks, Nerdio delivers the desired results more quickly and with less risk of human error.

AVD migration timeline

Embarking on a journey from your current VDI solution to Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD) can be a transformative move for your organization. This timeline serves as a strategic guide, ensuring you allocate ample time to take stock, deploy, and rigorously test your applications within AVD. Leverage our proven expertise and insights to empower your migration process, ensuring an efficient transition to a more agile and scalable desktop experience.

AVD MIGRATION TIMELINE



Factors to consider

- Number of resources dedicated to the migration process
- Experience with deploying and managing Azure Resources
- Change control and security review processes

Total deployment time

Large: 8,000+ users
12 months

Medium: 1,000–8,000 users
6 months

Small: 1,000 or less users
3 months



Phase 1

Prepare identities

- Configure Entra ID
- [Verify hybrid identities](#)
- Permissions for deployment

Phase 2

Azure subscriptions

- Create AVD subscription
- Permissions for deployment
- [Configure Azure Networking](#)
- [Deploy Nerdio](#)

Factors to consider

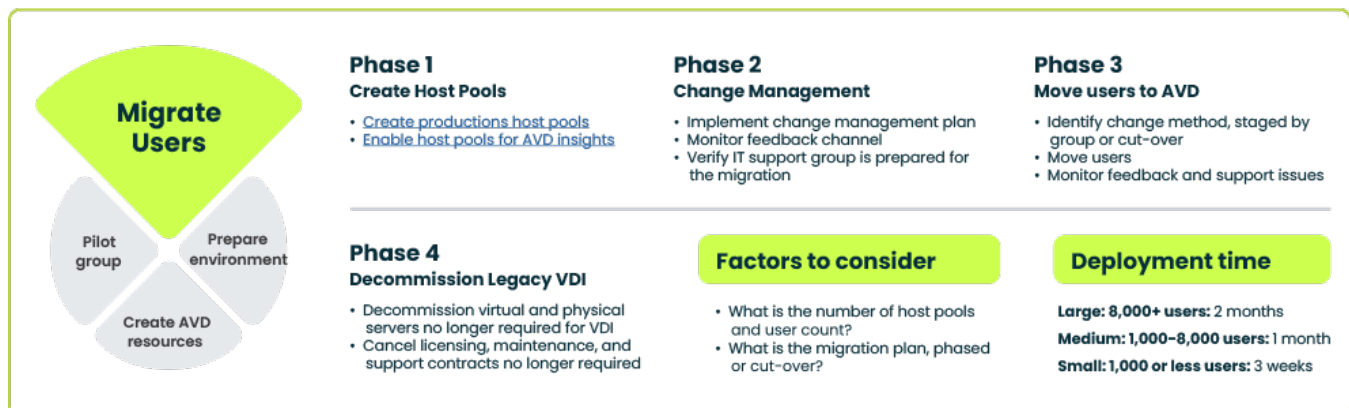
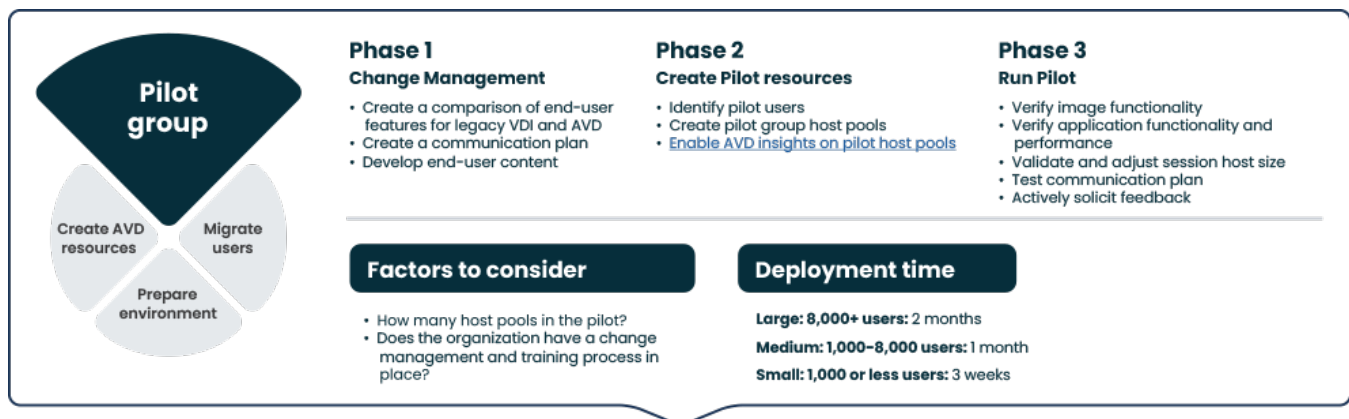
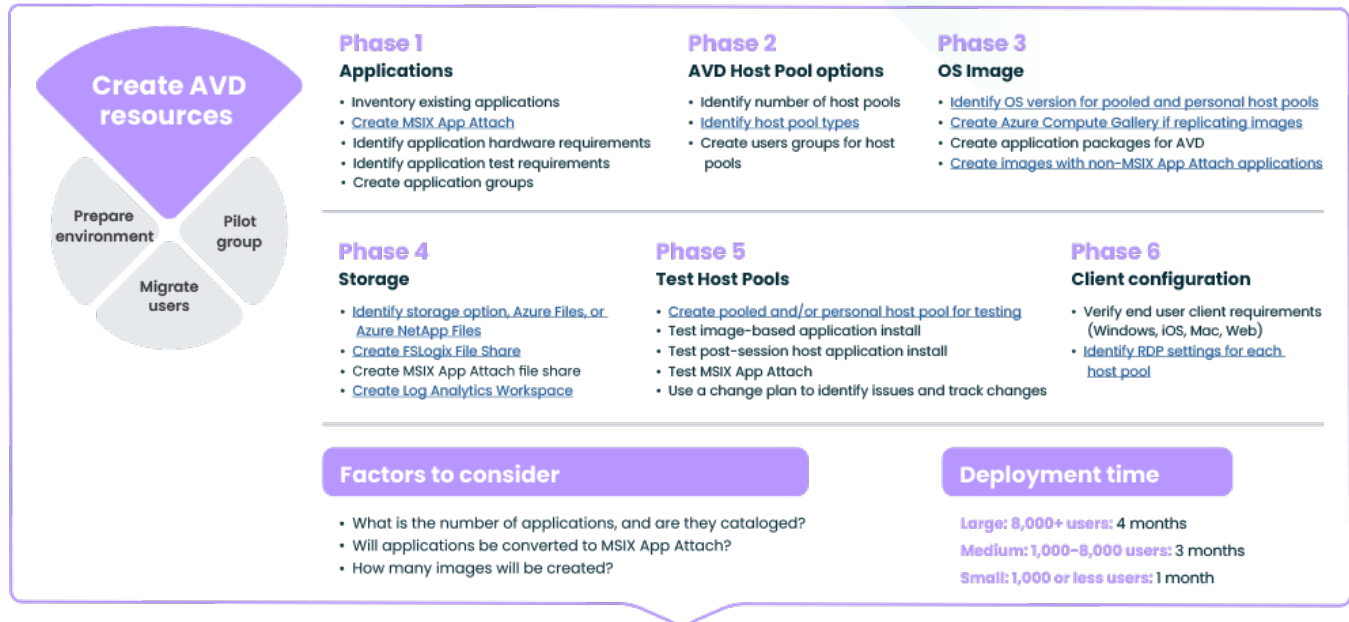
- Is Entra ID configured?
- Is Windows AD in use and synchronized with Entra ID?
- Are Azure Subscriptions and/or Landing Zones in place?

Deployment time

Large: 8,000+ users
2 months

Medium: 1,000–8,000 users
1 month

Small: 1,000 or less users
2 weeks



Why AVD with Nerdio is the most viable alternative to Citrix

The business case is straightforward. AVD combined with Nerdio delivers exactly what both organizations and IT departments are looking for: efficient desktop virtualization at the lowest cost.

1. It's less expensive

For many enterprises, changes to Citrix license terms and support policies are driving up costs to levels that are simply unsustainable. Nerdio costs start at \$6 per user per month and top out at just \$10 per user per month.

2. It's fit for purpose

As evidenced by the Gartner DaaS report, Microsoft is actively innovating to address customer needs. AVD's global infrastructure, especially combined with Azure Local for those who need hybrid environments, makes it a direct competitor for the Citrix model. Nerdio mirrors this drive, with the ability to move quickly to assist customers with feature updates.

3. It's simple

Nerdio offers a highly evolved, comprehensive, and easy-to-use set of management tools designed to make the adoption, configuration, and management of AVD efficient, effective, and most of all, simple. This addresses a key concern for Citrix customers looking to make the switch.



About Nerdio

Nerdio is a leading provider of powerful, simplified cloud management solutions for businesses of all sizes. Trusted by managed service providers (MSPs) and enterprise IT departments alike, Nerdio equips organizations with seamless, cost-effective management tools for Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD), Windows 365, and comprehensive Modern Work solutions.

With thousands of customers worldwide, Nerdio accelerates cloud adoption, enabling companies to thrive in an era of hybrid work by providing modern, future-proof technology that adapts to evolving workplace needs.

For more information, please visit **www.getnerdio.com**.