

## Telework Gets More Cost-Effective and Safer: Thank the “Cloud”

Telework has gained momentum, with 103,000 employees in 78 agencies working from home at least once a month, according to the Office of Personnel Management. Agencies continue to rack up benefits like enhanced Continuity of Operations, environmental sustainability, reduced office space requirements, and appeal to new college graduates.

“And yet some agencies have held back from a full-on push for telework because of concerns about costs, information security, and performance,” says Kapil Bakshi, chief solutions architect for federal government, Cisco.

Now cloud computing is toppling the remaining barriers to widespread telework in government.

### The Difference Is Where Your Applications and Data Live

With the cloud version of telework, a worker's applications and data are stored not on a laptop on the kitchen table, but on a centralized server back at the agency data center. The employee uses an inexpensive thin client device to display a “virtual desktop” that's actually running in the cloud (in this case, a server at the agency).

Cloud computing overcomes the few remaining barriers to more widespread telework adoption:

- **Keeping sensitive data private.** Agencies don't need to worry about lost laptops containing proprietary data. Applications and data are stored on the system in the agency data center, not a hard drive.
- **Reducing costs.** A thin client device for employee's homes costs far less than a laptop or desktop PC. Lifetime costs are lower as well, because the agency IT group doesn't need to upgrade employees' PCs or manage their software. All software changes are made just once on the centralized system that hosts the agency's business applications.
- **High-performance.** Teleworkers are most productive when they can access services and data just as fast from home as they can from the office. “Performance is much faster your desktop is hosted at the agency data center,” Bakshi says. “You don't have to wait for your application data to travel over the network to your home. Only the screen display travels, and it takes just a small fraction of the bandwidth.”

### What You Need

To enable employees to telework with just a thin client, you need the following:

- **A cost-effective, easy to manage computing system to host applications and virtual desktops.** The Cisco Unified Computing System unifies all the back-end equipment needed for telework into a single system. That includes network, compute, and storage access. A unified system costs less to purchase, manage, and maintain.
- **Virtualization software.** Simply put, virtualization means that agency applications can run on any server blade that happens to be available when the teleworker needs the application. During busy times, the application runs on more server blades so that performance doesn't slow down. The Cisco Unified Computing System has VMware virtualization technologies built in.
- **Support for virtual desktops.** When teleworkers log on to the agency network from home, they receive a virtual desktop (sometimes called a virtual machine) for the duration of their session. When they log off, it becomes available for someone else's use. Like applications, virtual desktops can also run on any available server blade in the Cisco Unified Computing System.
- **Fast application performance over the network:** Cisco Wide Area Application Services (WAAS) technology uses several techniques so that teleworkers experience LAN-like performance from home. Your agency just needs one appliance in the data center and a module in the routers that employees use.
- **A home setup.** Typical components are an IP phone, VPN router with wireless connectivity, and management software at headquarters. The Cisco Virtual Office bundles all of it in one convenient package.

To watch a short video about the Cisco Unified Computing System, visit [www.cisco.com/go/ucs](http://www.cisco.com/go/ucs)

To read about Cisco telework solutions, visit: [www.cisco.com/go/telework](http://www.cisco.com/go/telework)




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