

360 View – Stratusphere™ FIT

Overview

Stratusphere FIT is the industry-leading assessment solution for organizations looking to capture desktop and end-user computing information, including details on supporting hardware and software, performance, resource utilization, applications and networking. The Stratusphere FIT solution defines and captures metrics necessary to support desktop- and application-virtualization projects across all desktop platforms, including VMware Horizon Suite, Citrix XenDesktop and XenApp. Stratusphere FIT provides organizations with the information to confidently tackle any desktop transformation strategy.

Do You Need Stratusphere FIT?

You do if you said “yes” to:

- Is there a hardware refresh cycle approaching for your organization that is prohibitively expensive?
- Do you lack a complete inventory of which OSES/applications are deployed to users? (Critical for BYOD environments.)
- Do you lack a method for capacity planning based on users’ actual consumption of CPU, memory and storage?
- Do you think your network will have problems supporting remote desktop sessions to performance SLAs?
- Are you unsure of desktop usage patterns or whether users need specific external USB-based devices?
- Are you unsure of your virtual desktop user experience requirements and expectations?
- Do you lack the means to perform capacity planning and size the infrastructure appropriately?
- Are you uncertain of which users or user groups should be migrated first?

Stratusphere FIT Customer Use Cases

Stratusphere FIT applies to all physical desktop environments where customers want to start a desktop transformation project in order to:

- Assess and quantify machine, user, application, OS and infrastructure metrics
- Gain visibility into user persona and authored data
- Quantify application use to support master image design
- Identify unused applications
- Baseline user experience
- Determine whether applications used are a good/fair/poor FIT for virtualization
- Design infrastructure and size resources based on actual resource consumption
- Pool users into tiered desktop architecture
- Plan for infrastructure capacity (CPU, RAM, GPU, Storage, IOPs)

Designing and implementing a virtual desktop environment is difficult to accomplish without assessments that provide visibility into the resource metrics that impact overall success. Stratusphere FIT enables organizations to take a thoughtful approach to assessing and designing their desktop transformation.

Proactive

Users who seek help at the project outset use Stratusphere FIT to provide a sound assessment foundation on which they can make solid planning decisions for desktop image per user group and infrastructure design. They are also able to set baselines in order to validate success at the project’s end.

Post-Production

Users who face a stalled project due to serious performance and user-experience issues – usually 12-months or more into it – find that they need to go back to the drawing board. Stratusphere FIT enables robust assessment to select the appropriate users or machines to be virtualized first as well as to ensure that the target virtual infrastructure is designed to the right specifications and provisioned cost-effectively.

Business Benefits

Stratusphere FIT can:

Save Time	Save Money	Boost Productivity
Quickly recognize the users/machines/groups/applications that can be virtualized first without need for one-on-one interviews or “guesstimates.” Accurate and available information enables projects to proceed unhindered.	Highly accurate metrics lead to highly accurate user-tiering and capacity planning, thus ensuring projects meet overall ROI and TCO attributes.	Assessment processes are automated and run in the background. Users are not subjected to interviews to collect data, thus avoiding inaccuracies and lost work time.
Effortlessly identify hardware, application and OS inventory – as well as connected devices – to quickly progress from assessment to design.	No need to procure additional hardware or server licenses to run Stratusphere FIT.	One solution supports across all platforms, including physical desktops, VMware and Citrix virtual desktops and Terminal Server sessions.
Inventory and consumption information can be leveraged to quickly identify application use and define a thoughtful applications strategy.	Pinpoint applications that are not being used – saving on licensing costs – and identify over-provisioned systems resources.	Assessments can be easily performed on new user groups before they are added to the new environment to ensure that the infrastructure can support them.

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Key Features

The information gathered by Stratusphere FIT reflects a comprehensive list of the critical data, design and sizing points that must be considered and analyzed in order to arrive at a cost-effective and optimum performance-oriented virtual infrastructure design.

Indicator	Benefit
Cross Platform Coverage	Works on all Windows OSes (Windows 2000 and above) as well as Linux-based OSes such as Red Hat 4, 5, and 6, CentOS 4 and 5, Ubuntu, Fedora, SUSE, etc.
Customizable VDI FIT Profile	Has a unique customizable, composite metric called VDI FIT to indicate the suitability of users, user groups, machines and machine groups for migration to the virtual infrastructure. Incoming data from physical machines – based on amount of resources consumed, performance requirements, and infrastructure limitations – is used to create Good/Fair/Poor ratings of users and machines.
Detect Hardware Configuration	Detects the hardware and software configuration of machines in order to determine the amount of CPU, memory, disk, and IOPs being used by particular users or groups over time.
Discover External Devices and Printers Connected	Provides reporting on which external devices (including detailed printer configurations) are connected to a particular machine and identifies who is utilizing it.
Application Usage and Virtualization Complexity	Collects detailed metrics and information on applications, including when they were installed, when they were last used, their frequency of usage, installation size, resource-utilization requirements, licensing implications, etc. It also tracks the IOPS (Read/Write) and I/O rate (Read/Write) of each application. Stratusphere FIT also collects data about whether an application would be a Low/Medium/High complexity virtualization candidate.
Resource Utilization, Performance Requirements	Presents information in granular detail to provide visibility into a user's or machine's resource requirements. Without these metrics, guess work and overestimates typically add cost and excess capacity in the initial infrastructure design.
Baseline User Experience	Helps baseline the physical-machine user experience so administrators can compare and contrast the user experience with the physical-machine vs the virtual-machine.
Design Criteria, Capacity Planning and Sizing Needs	Can be used to aggregate actual resource requirements on a per-user or user-group basis in order to design the virtual infrastructure with adequate amounts of CPU MHz, RAM, Page Files, IOPs, I/O rate, and network bandwidth. Stratusphere FIT provides average, peak average and peak values for each metric.
User Profile Space Requirements	Calculates the number of files, size of files and folders, and types of files that exist within a user's profile area on the Windows OS for capacity planning of resources required to host user profile and data.
Determine Network Viability for Virtual Desktop Sessions	Determines whether the existing network infrastructure and speed can handle virtual desktop sessions. Network latency is measured in order to select best protocol(s) to provide a good remote-user experience.

Unique Differentiators

Stratusphere FIT supports a thoughtful analytics-driven desktop-transformation strategy and provides unrivaled information about desktop resource consumption, hardware and software configuration, performance metrics, resource utilization and user-experience information. Its VDI FIT-composited scores rate users and machines. Stratusphere FIT also uniquely enables baselining of user performance to ensure that the desktop transformation can be quantitatively validated. The solution provides ample built-in reporting with the flexibility to create custom reports as well as ad hoc reports via the Stratusphere API.

True Cross-Platform Support

Hypervisors include VMware® ESX 3.0 and higher, VMware® ESXi 3.0 and higher, Citrix® XenServer 5.5 and higher, Microsoft® Hyper-V on Windows® 2008 R2 and higher, and KVM. Desktop platforms (physical and virtual) include Windows operating systems including Linux® operating systems. Virtual desktop platforms include VMware® View, Citrix® XenDesktop and Citrix® XenApp. Protocols: Citrix® ICA, RDP and VMware® PCoIP. Thin application solutions supported include VMware® ThinApp and Microsoft® App-V.

Frequently Asked Questions

What kind of resources does the Stratusphere FIT Connector ID (CID) Key require?

The Stratusphere FIT CID Key agent is very lightweight. It takes about 0.3% CPU, 7-10MB RAM on XP and 7-12MB RAM on Windows 7. It takes about 5MB of space on the hard disk on average (up to 10MB max.). It uploads information to the Stratusphere Hub every hour and takes about 30KB of payload every time it calls back.

What is the average data collection duration for an assessment?

Liquidware Labs recommends a minimum of 15 days for data collection from user machines. In cases where they may be task workers and their workload is constant, that could be reduced to about 1 week. In cases where there may be higher workloads during the end of the month or quarter, Liquidware Labs recommends capturing information during that period to understand the peak workloads.

What is install/uninstall mechanism for the CID Key?

Stratusphere FIT CID Keys can be pushed out using any standard software distribution tool such as SMS, SCCM, LANDesk, Altiris, etc. It can also be pushed out using Microsoft AD GPO. The uninstallation of the CID Key can be initiated through the Stratusphere FIT UI by specifying the number of days. The CID Keys will receive the message and uninstall themselves after the scheduled duration expires.

Can Stratusphere FIT conduct application assessments?

Yes. Stratusphere FIT assesses applications for complexity such as size, usage of services, installation of services, usage of device drivers, installation of device drivers, COM/DCOM, and Shell extensions. Based on all of these factors Stratusphere FIT assigns a complexity rating such as Low/Medium/High for each application.

Transforming
the Desktop™

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