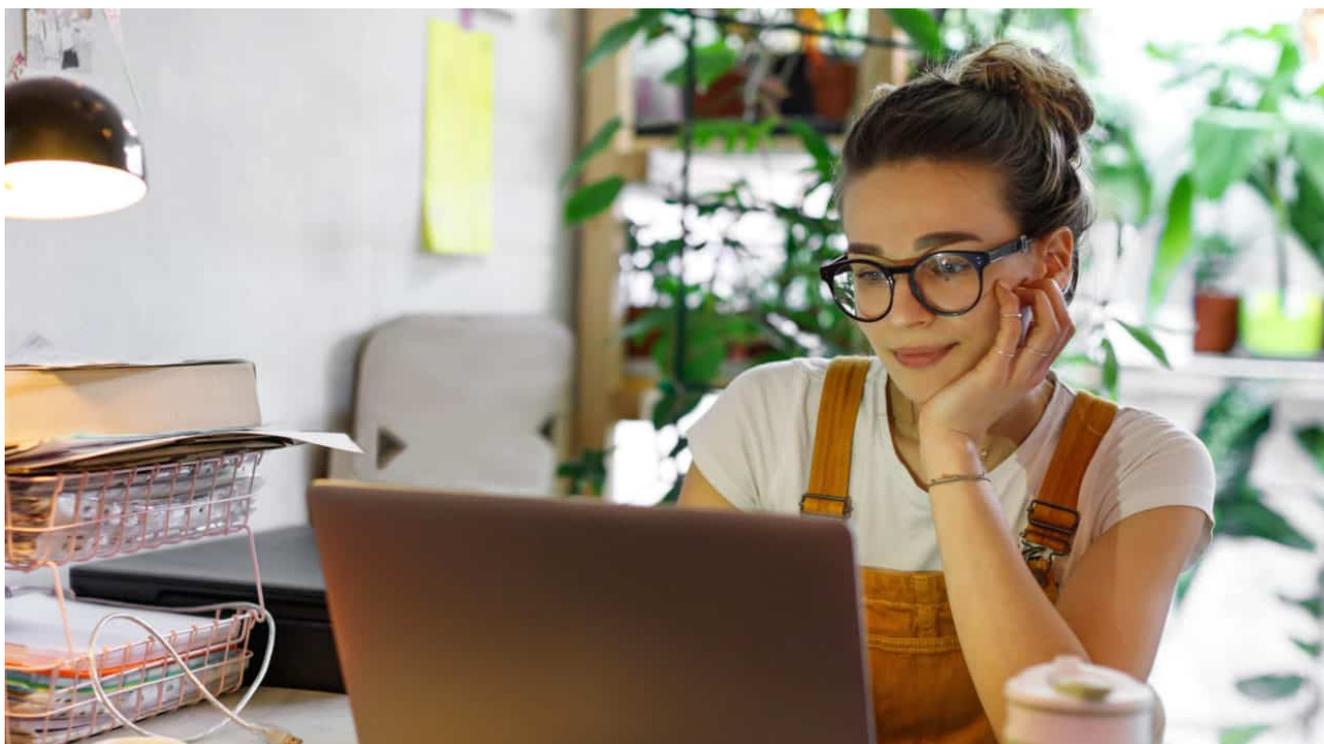


Remote, Virtualized, Cloud-Huh?! Making Sense of Remote Solutions for Media Production

written by Rose de Fremery | March 31, 2020



Production teams are scrambling in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, trying to quickly adopt remote workflows so they can keep their projects moving while also abiding by social distancing guidelines. But how can production professionals know which remote post-production solution is best for their needs? To help you pick the option that's right for you, here's a brief overview of the three main categories of remote post-production solutions as well as some pointers on when you might want to choose one over the other.

Factors to Consider When Choosing a Remote Post-Production Solution

When you're trying to figure out how to work remotely, chances are pretty good that the first question that flashes into your mind is: "How do I even know what I need in the first place?" To answer that question, you'll want to consider three key factors: scale, collaboration, and security. Determining your team's requirements in each of these areas will point the way to the right solution.

For example, a large post-production company that is working on a major motion picture and has a globally distributed team will probably place a premium on effective collaboration, and security is likely to be a high priority as well. A smaller post house with a lean budget and a crew of between ten and twenty people can probably get the job done with a more straightforward solution with basic collaboration features, and security may be less of an urgent priority.



While there are several important aspects that you must consider when choosing the right option for working remotely,

the good news is that there's a solution for everybody. Here's a look at the top three technologies for remote post-production, their advantages and constraints, and who will likely benefit from them the most.

1. Remote Access

If you're looking for a band-aid solution to get you back to work as quickly as possible, remote access is a good pick. This technology lets you connect to your computer at work via remote desktop software, allowing you to access media and continue to edit as you did before. Remote desktop technology streams your work computer desktop straight to your computer at home, giving you the full ability to use your editing tools as if you were right there in the studio. It's also a solid choice if you have a lean budget and can't spend a lot of money on technology right now.

That said, there are some limitations to remote desktop software that you should know about before moving ahead with it. Because this solution was originally designed for office workers who needed to access their files and email from home, it wasn't created with the needs of post-production professionals in mind. As a result, post-production teams may find it a bit clunky to use. Remote desktop technology is not optimized for video editing, and it doesn't support collaboration all that well compared to virtualization or the cloud. You may also need to make sure you have sufficient internet connectivity at each of your locations in order to work well using remote desktop technology.

This option is best for: independent post-production pros and smaller post houses that need a simple, low-cost solution for accessing their systems and storage from remote locations.

2. Virtualized Environments

If you need to scale and collaboration is also a priority, virtualization is an intermediary solution that may fit the bill. Virtualization creates an environment that feels very much like the one you are used to at your post or broadcast facility. This is made possible by running all of your software on a virtual machine, enabling everyone on your team to go in and access it at the same time. You can work more quickly and play back media more seamlessly in a virtualized environment than you would using remote desktop software, assuming you have the right internet connectivity. This environment uses PCoIP connectivity that is optimized for media productions.

Your production team can collaborate more effectively and flexibly, at scale, with these building blocks in place. This can come in handy if you're editing a motion picture, for example, and you have ten team members who all need to collaborate on the same project at the same time. Virtualization also supports co-location quite well, meaning these team members can work from anywhere—whether that's New York, California, or an entirely different location—in a more sophisticated fashion.

If security is a concern for your post-production company, then that may be another reason to consider a virtualized solution. All of your media assets are still housed within your data center but, because your post-production systems are virtualized, your storage has an additional layer of protection. Virtualization provides you with a similar level of security that you would have on your other IT systems, allowing your team to work more securely from remote locations.

This option is best for: medium to large production companies or broadcasters, often with teams of 25 people or more, that

need to scale their capacity for remote production.

3. The Cloud

The cloud is by far the most seamless and sophisticated option for production teams that cannot compromise on efficiency or collaboration. In a cloud scenario, all of your media and your editing tools are available directly in the cloud. Your editors can access media, play it back, edit it, and collaborate with one another from literally any location in the world. They can archive media, access high-speed and high-quality playback, make real-time edits, and gain full accessibility to their workloads in the cloud. This option also provides robust security, helping to prevent unauthorized parties or opportunistic attackers from accessing your media files.

A fully cloud solution comes with a bigger price tag than its remote desktop or virtualized counterparts, and it also requires sufficient bandwidth to work well. However, it can also be thought of as a valuable long-term investment. Cloud technology strengthens your business continuity posture, allowing your production team to remain resilient and keep working remotely right through crises like the one we're experiencing now. Since the cloud frees you from having to maintain your own data center, it also removes the administrative overhead that you might have to contend with in a remote desktop or virtualized scenario.

Ultimately, the cloud empowers your team to work efficiently and stay on track with its projects from any location at all—no matter what challenges or disruptions may come your way. It's also worth noting that you don't have to go all in on the cloud at once. Some post-production teams dip a toe into the water with a hybrid solution. For example, they might store media in the cloud but still do their editing locally. That way, they can access some of the cloud's benefits and see

how well it meets their needs without having to put a dent in their operating expenditures budget.

This option is best for: medium or large production houses or broadcasters, particularly those that are working on large studio productions or have global teams, that require a sophisticated solution for remote productivity and collaboration.



There's a Remote Post-Production Solution for Everyone

Although it's a difficult moment for post-production teams as they struggle to figure out how they can work well from remote locations on short notice, the good news is that there's a remote post-production solution for every type of team, no matter the budget involved. With a little research and preparation, you can pick the option that's best for your team and spin up your new remote locations. Once you're in a position to begin thinking about your long-term plans for remote work, you can build upon the solution you've already

chosen to create a stronger foundation for the future. That way, the next time an emergency or a crisis arises, you'll be better able to minimize any disruption and stay productive no matter where your team is located.

Collaborate From Anywhere

If you're moving to a remote workflow, we're here to help.

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