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End User Computing

State of the Union 2026 - 2027

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Contents

Introduction.....	5
<i>About DaaS-like-a-Pro.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Contact information.....</i>	<i>6</i>
Summary.....	7
Demographics.....	8
<i>Roles.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Verticals.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Organization size.....</i>	<i>9</i>
Survey results.....	11
<i>DaaS / Cloud PC adoption.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Key business drivers for DaaS / Cloud PC adoption.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>DaaS adoption expected to keep growing.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Top challenges in adopting DaaS / Cloud PC.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Peak concurrent usage.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Cloud commitment: hybrid or fully cloud?.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Satisfaction with DaaS / Cloud PC solutions.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>How respondents perceive DaaS / Cloud PC.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>DaaS configuration.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Workload hosting locations.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>On-premises hypervisor technology.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Published applications vs. full desktops.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>DaaS / Cloud PC solutions in use.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>GPU / vGPU adoption.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Single-user virtual machine sizing.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Multi-user virtual machine sizing.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Value-add solutions & management.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Application layering and isolation.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Replacement or supplement solutions.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Secure Enterprise Browsers.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>OS and application deployment.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Digital Employee Experience (DEX) monitoring.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>What drives support tickets.....</i>	<i>31</i>
The role of AI in DaaS and Cloud PC.....	33
<i>Where AI is expected to deliver the most ROI.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Biggest risks of AI adoption.....</i>	<i>34</i>



Open questions.....	35
<i>Roadmap priorities for 2026–2028.....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Functionality gaps in DaaS and Cloud PC.....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Conclusion.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Thanks!.....</i>	<i>36</i>



Introduction

Welcome to the 2026 - 2027 edition of the End User Computing State of the Union. Building on last year's research, this edition tracks how Desktop as a Service (DaaS) and Cloud PC adoption has matured, how organizations are reshaping their strategies around AI, and where the remaining friction points sit for IT teams delivering virtual desktops and applications.

This year's survey also expands its scope: alongside adoption, configuration, and satisfaction, we asked respondents about the root causes behind end-user support tickets, their appetite for Secure Enterprise Browsers, and — for the first time — where they expect AI to deliver measurable ROI inside VDI, DaaS, and Cloud PC environments, as well as what risks concern them most.

The findings in this report reflect the current state of the EUC and DaaS industry as reported by practitioners in the field, covering usage, vendors, cost drivers, GPU adoption, AI, and the functionality gaps that remain top of mind heading into 2026 and beyond.

About DaaS-like-a-Pro

Founded in 2013, “VDI Like a PRO” (renamed DaaS Like a Pro) is an independent, community-driven research organization dedicated to advancing Desktop as a Service (DaaS) technologies. Our team includes experts like Ruben Spruijt, Mark Plettenberg of Parallels, Dennis Damen of Nexthink, and Christiaan Brinkhoff of Nerdio. We explore evolving trends in End User Computing, focusing on the deployment, configuration, and usage of DaaS across diverse customer environments. Our research, driven by expert analysis and community feedback, aims to guide organizations through the complexities of DaaS adoption and optimization.

Our publications serve as vital resources for IT professionals aiming to improve strategies and efficiencies in a dynamic digital landscape.

A special thank you to everyone in the community who took the time to complete this year's survey and share their open-ended feedback with us.



Contact information

If you have questions or are interested in accessing data from our survey, feel free to reach out. Our team members can be contacted at:

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Summary

The 2026–2027 survey highlights the following key trends in Desktop as a Service and Cloud PC:

- Key Drivers: Ease of management and enabling remote work are tied as the top adoption drivers, each cited by 12% of selections.
- Adoption: 81% of respondents are currently using DaaS and/or Cloud PC, with another 9% planning to implement it.
- Growth: 61% of respondents expect their DaaS/Cloud PC usage to increase over the next 1 to 3 years.
- Satisfaction: 81% of respondents are likely or very likely to recommend their DaaS or Cloud PC solution to a colleague.
- Cost remains the single biggest adoption barrier, cited in 16% of challenge selections — more than double the next most-cited factor.

Additional findings include the following:

1. Yes, currently using DaaS and/or Cloud PC was selected by 81% of respondents, confirming DaaS/Cloud PC has become the default delivery model for most organizations surveyed.
2. “Flexible” (17%) and “Secure” (17%) are the words respondents most associate with DaaS or Cloud PC, followed by “Modern” (16%).
3. 57% of respondents plan to stay fully in the cloud, with no plans to migrate workloads back on-premises.
4. Cost (16%) and vendor lock-in (10%) are the two leading barriers to adoption — a shift from last year, when integration and performance ranked higher.
5. Microsoft Azure hosts 50% of workload VMs, with on-premises/co-location still relevant at 28%.
6. Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop remains the most-used DaaS/Cloud PC platform (20%), followed closely by Windows 365 Cloud PC (18%) and Citrix (14%).
7. 36% of respondents run no GPU/vGPU-enabled workloads at all, underlining that graphics acceleration remains a minority use-case.
8. Application crashes and slowness are the number one reason for support tickets, cited in 24% of selections — more than user profile and storage issues combined.
9. On the AI front, DEX analytics and capacity management are seen as the capabilities most likely to deliver measurable ROI, while privacy/data-governance concerns (21%) and security risks (15%) top the list of AI adoption concerns.
10. Roadmap priorities for 2026–2028 center on secure access, cost reduction, AI-driven automation, and continued Microsoft-native consolidation (AVD, Intune, Nerdio).

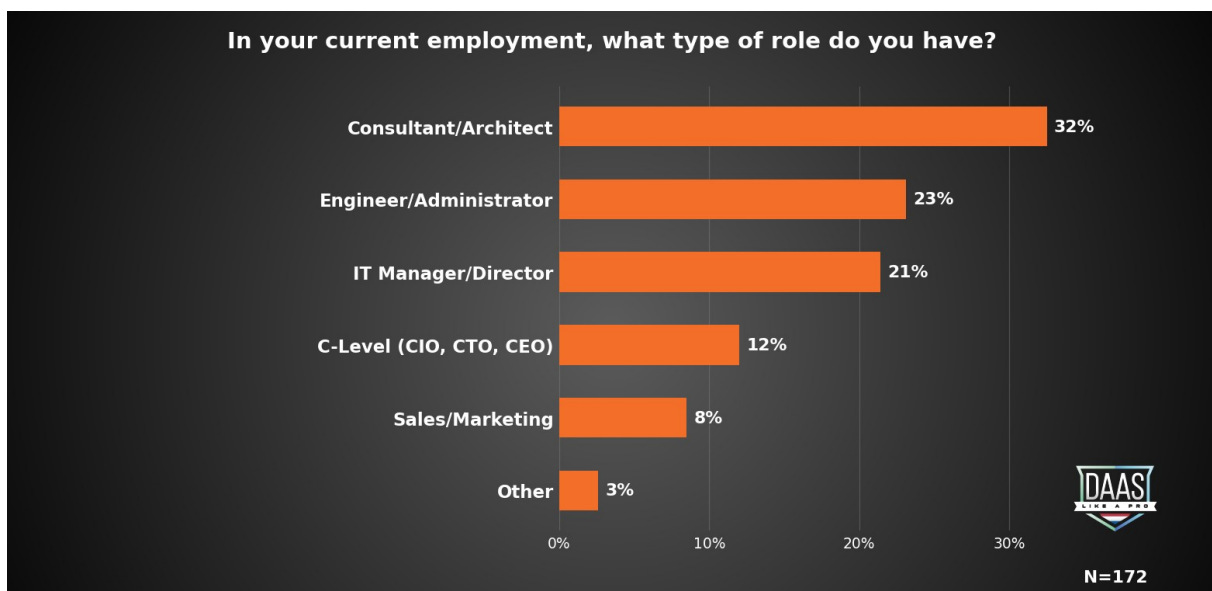


Demographics

This chapter outlines the key demographic characteristics of this year's survey (N=172). As in prior editions, response depth varies by question — not everyone who started the survey answered every question, and later, DaaS-specific questions were answered by a smaller, more engaged subset of roughly 58 respondents who completed the full survey.

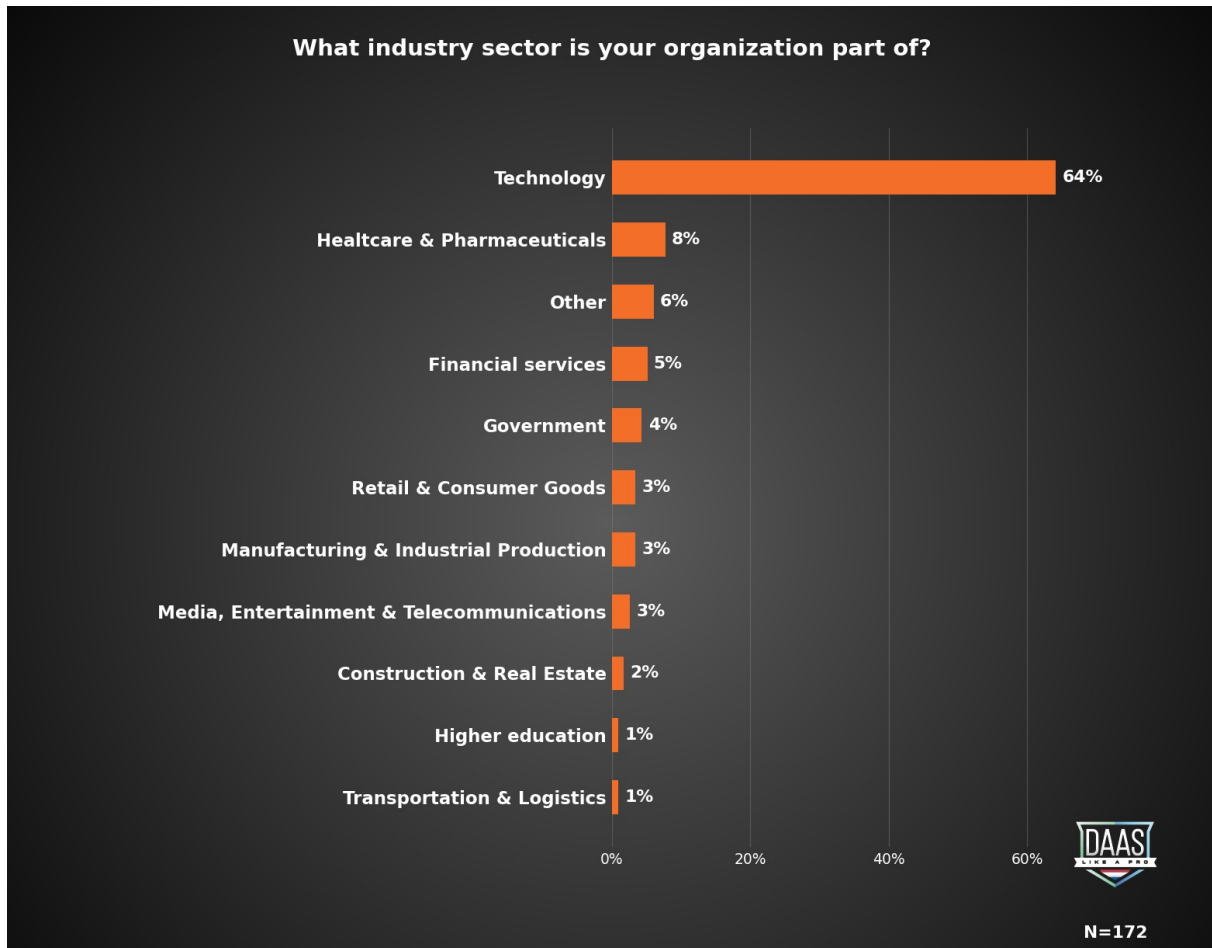
Roles

Consultants and Architects remain the most represented role, comprising 32% of respondents, followed by Engineers/Administrators (23%) and IT Managers/Directors (21%). C-Level executives and Sales/Marketing professionals make up a smaller share, consistent with the survey's continued emphasis on hands-on technical and architectural perspectives.



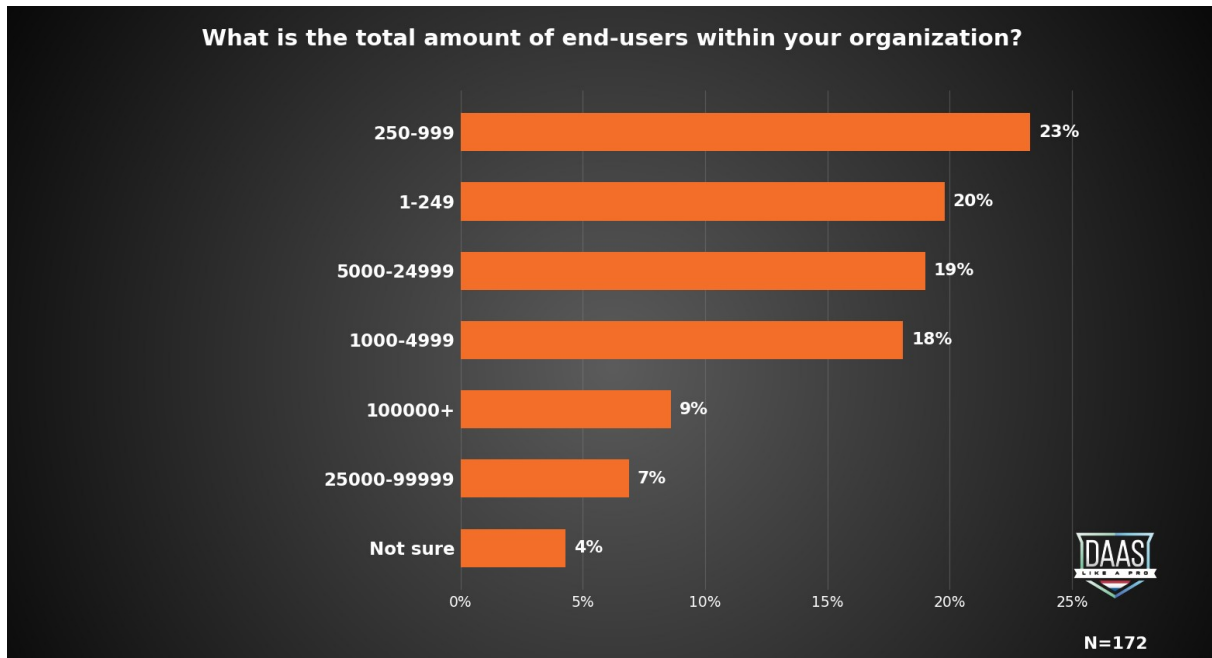
Verticals

Technology remains by far the most represented sector at 64% of respondents. Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals (8%) and a range of other sectors — financial services, government, retail, manufacturing, media, and construction — round out the picture, underlining that DaaS and Cloud PC adoption now spans well beyond the technology industry itself.



Organization size

Respondents are fairly evenly spread across organization sizes, with 23% managing 250-999 end-users and 20% at smaller organizations of 1-249 users. Mid-size and large enterprises (1,000-24,999 users) together account for a substantial share, while a meaningful group of respondents (16% combined) represent very large organizations of 25,000+ end-users.

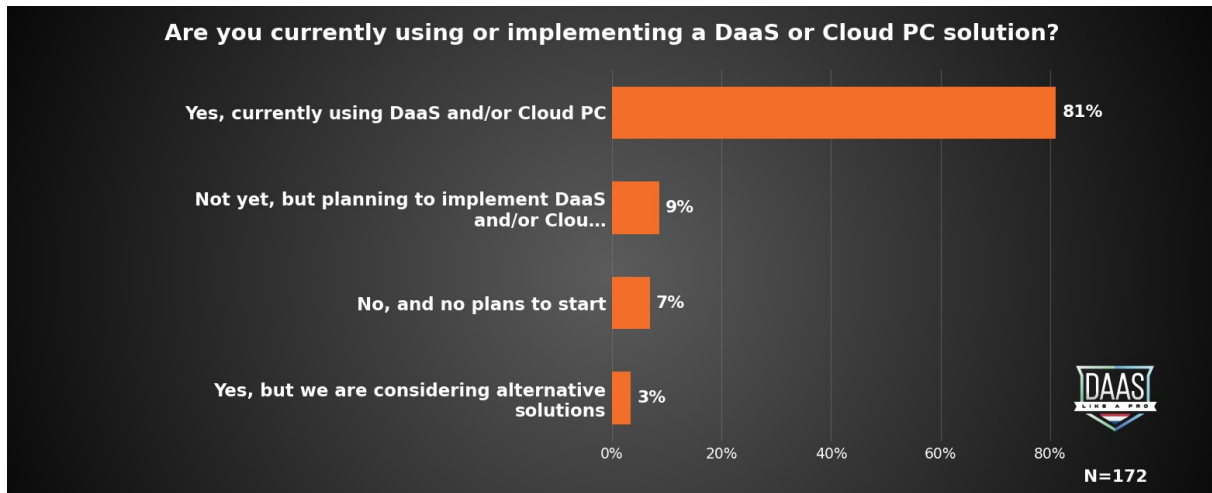


Survey results

In this chapter, we look at the main findings from the survey, highlighting the key trends and insights shared by respondents. Results are grouped into four categories: DaaS/Cloud PC adoption, DaaS configuration, value-add & management tooling, and the emerging role of AI.

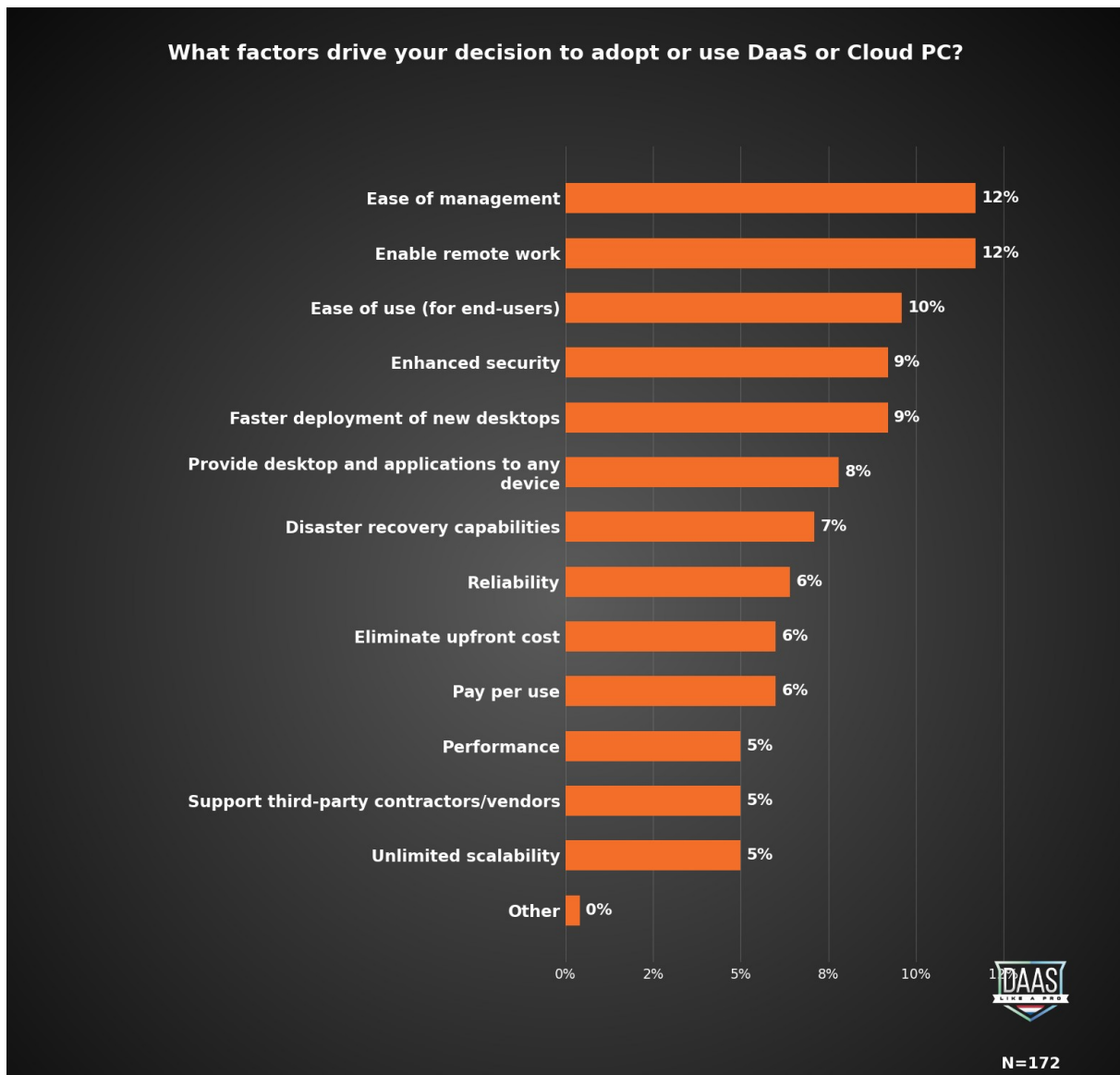
DaaS / Cloud PC adoption

Adoption of DaaS and Cloud PC remains high: 81% of respondents report they are currently using a DaaS and/or Cloud PC solution, 9% are not yet using one but plan to implement it, and only 7% have no plans to adopt DaaS at all. A small group (3%) are using DaaS today but are actively evaluating alternative solutions.

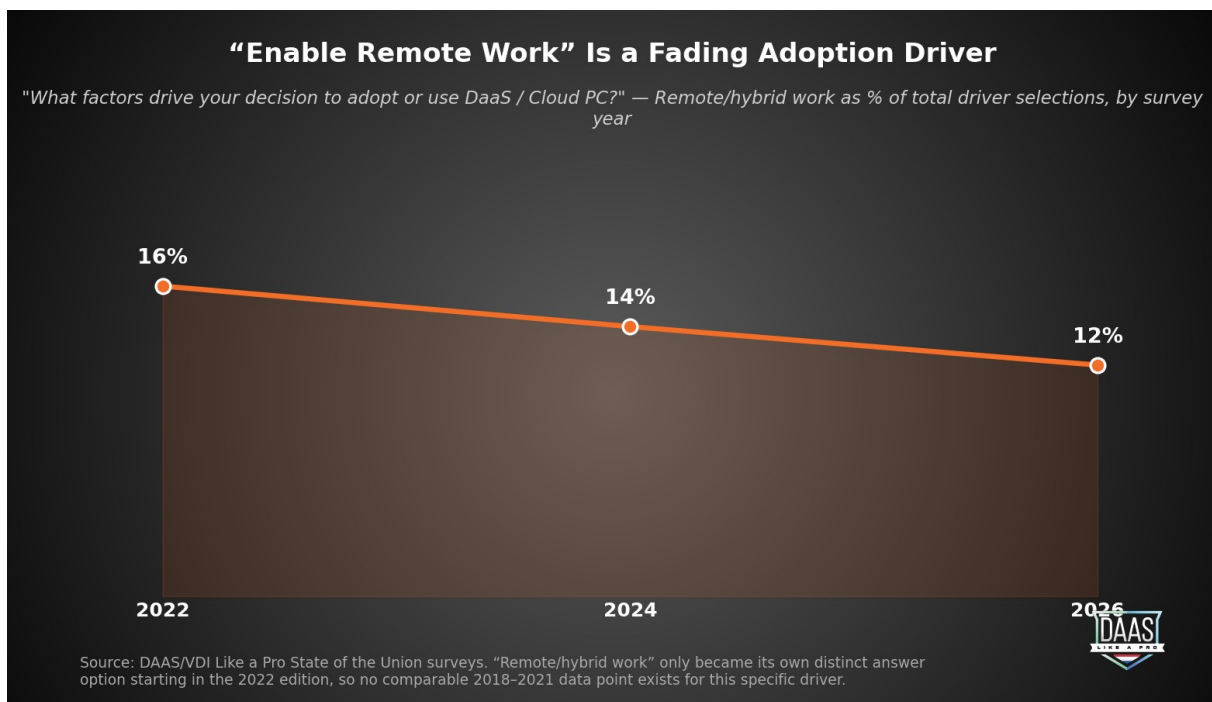
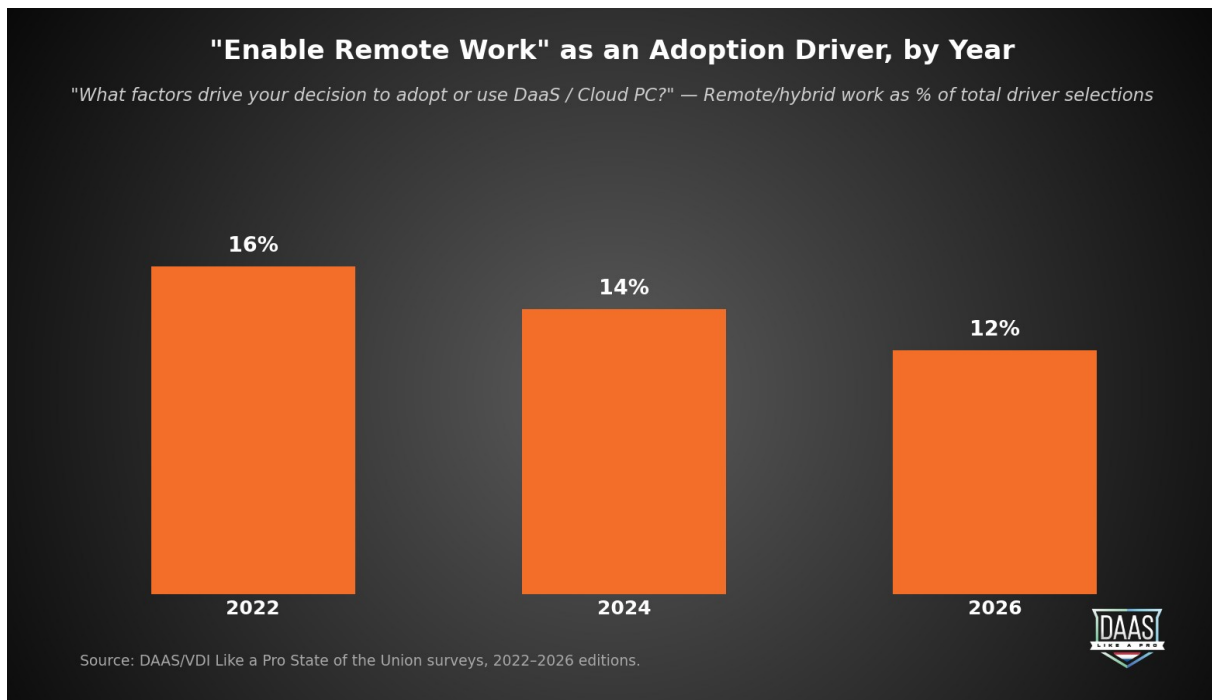


Key business drivers for DaaS / Cloud PC adoption

Ease of management and enabling remote work are now tied as the leading adoption drivers, each accounting for 12% of selections. Ease of use for end-users (10%), enhanced security (9%), and faster deployment of new desktops (9%) round out the top five. Compared to prior years, remote work has slipped from the single dominant driver to one of several co-equal priorities — a sign that DaaS is now valued as much for operational efficiency as for location flexibility.

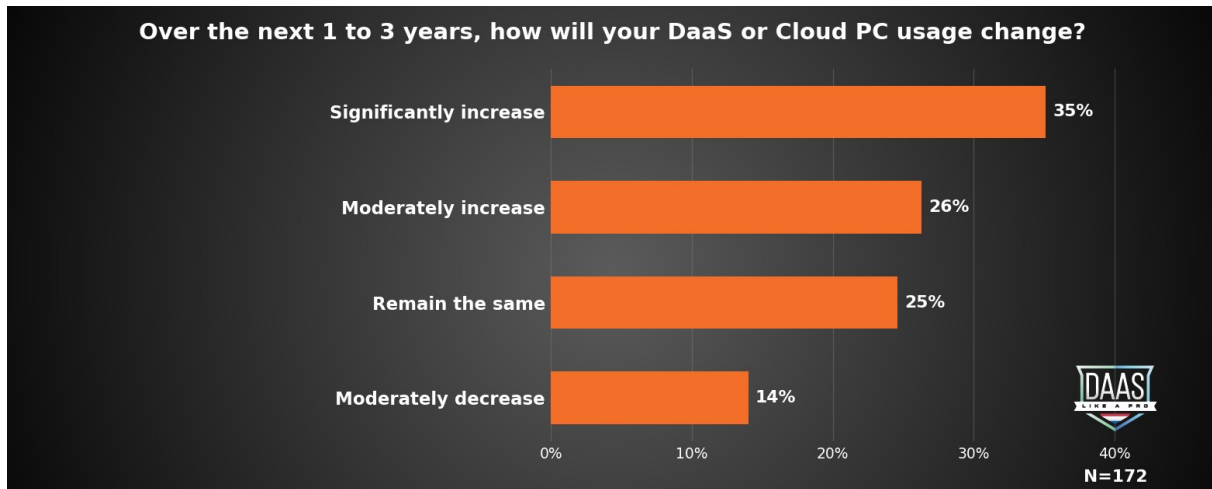


Looking at this driver over time reveals a clear multi-year trend: “Enable remote work” has faded steadily as a distinct adoption driver since it was first tracked as its own category in 2022.



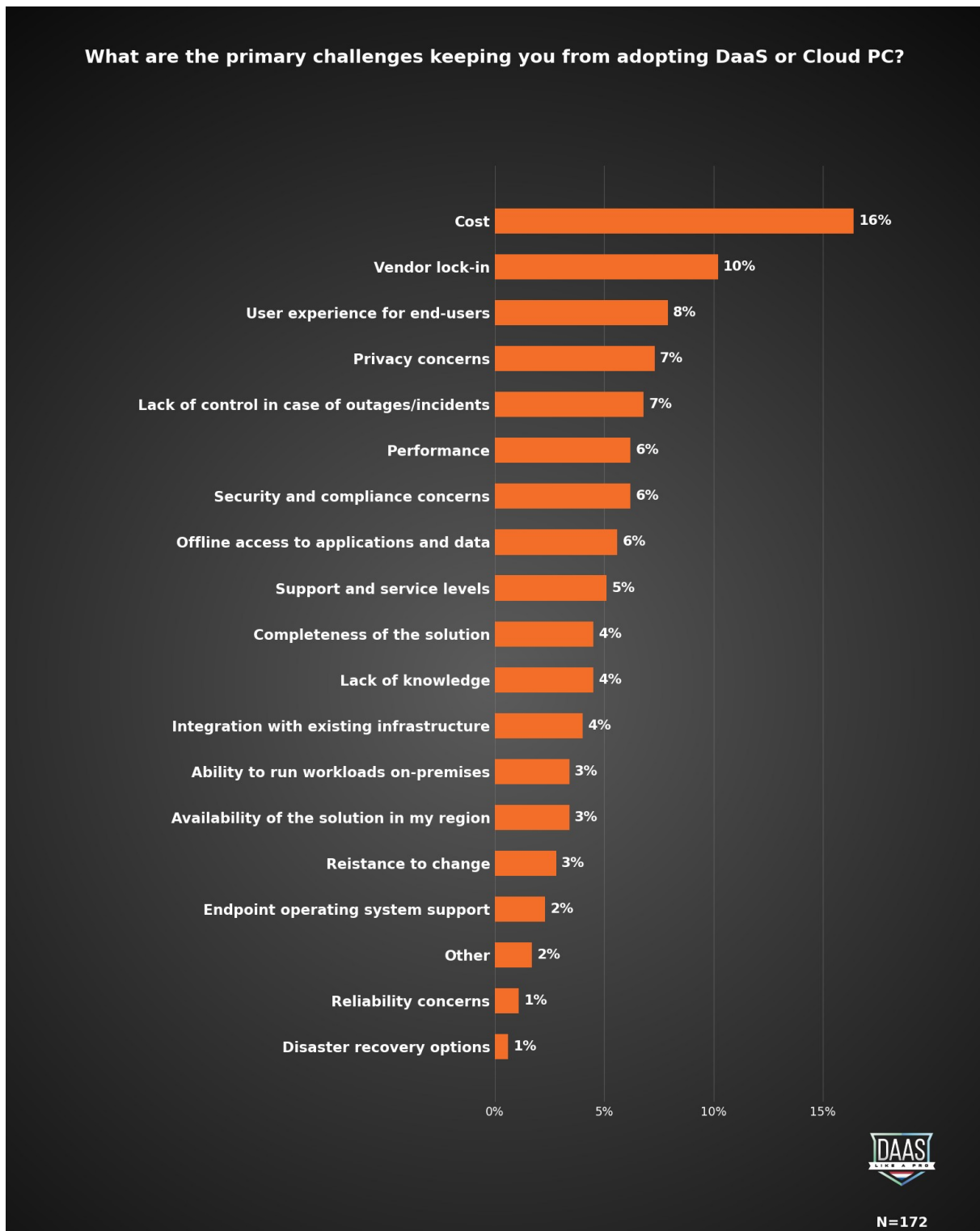
DaaS adoption expected to keep growing

35% of respondents expect their organization's DaaS/Cloud PC usage to significantly increase over the next 1 to 3 years, and a further 26% expect a moderate increase — together over 60% anticipating growth. 25% expect usage to remain the same, while a minority (14%) expect a moderate decrease.



Top challenges in adopting DaaS / Cloud PC

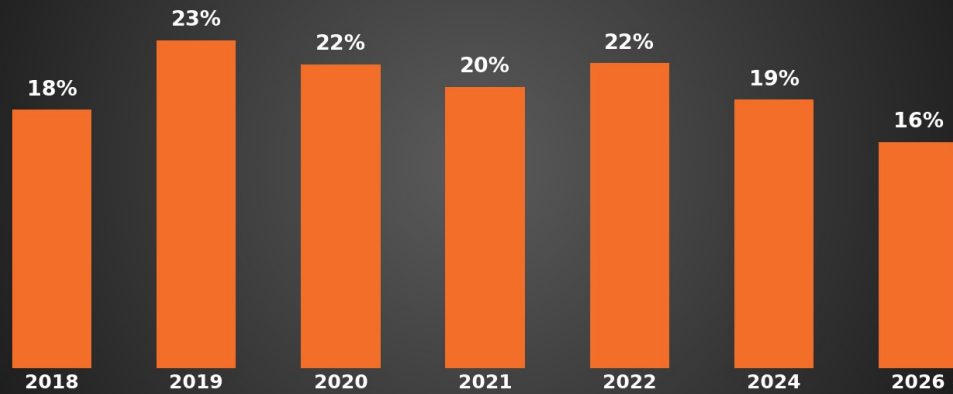
Cost has pulled further ahead as the leading barrier to adoption, cited in 16% of challenge selections — well above vendor lock-in (10%), user experience for end-users (8%), and privacy concerns (7%). Notably, vendor lock-in has risen sharply in prominence this year, reflecting continued unease following the Broadcom/VMware and Citrix ownership changes, while classic concerns such as performance and integration with existing infrastructure have receded relative to cost and commercial flexibility.



Cost has topped this list in every single survey edition tracked since 2018, fluctuating between 16% and 23% of challenge selections without ever dropping out of the top tier of adoption barriers — the multi-year view below shows just how persistent this concern has been.

"Cost" as a Top DaaS Adoption Challenge, by Year

"What are the biggest challenges in adopting/using DaaS or Cloud PC?" — Cost as % of total challenge selections

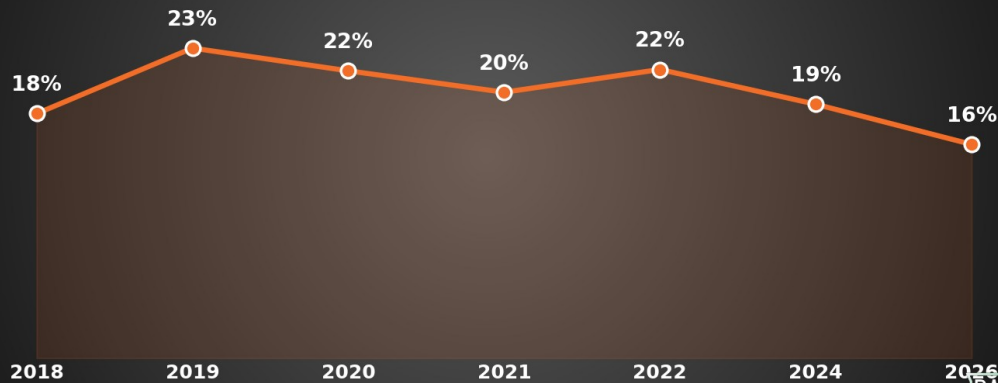


Source: DAAS/VDI Like a Pro State of the Union surveys, 2018–2026 editions.



Cost Remains the #1 Barrier to DaaS Adoption

"What are the biggest challenges in adopting/using DaaS or Cloud PC?" — Cost as % of total challenge selections, by survey year

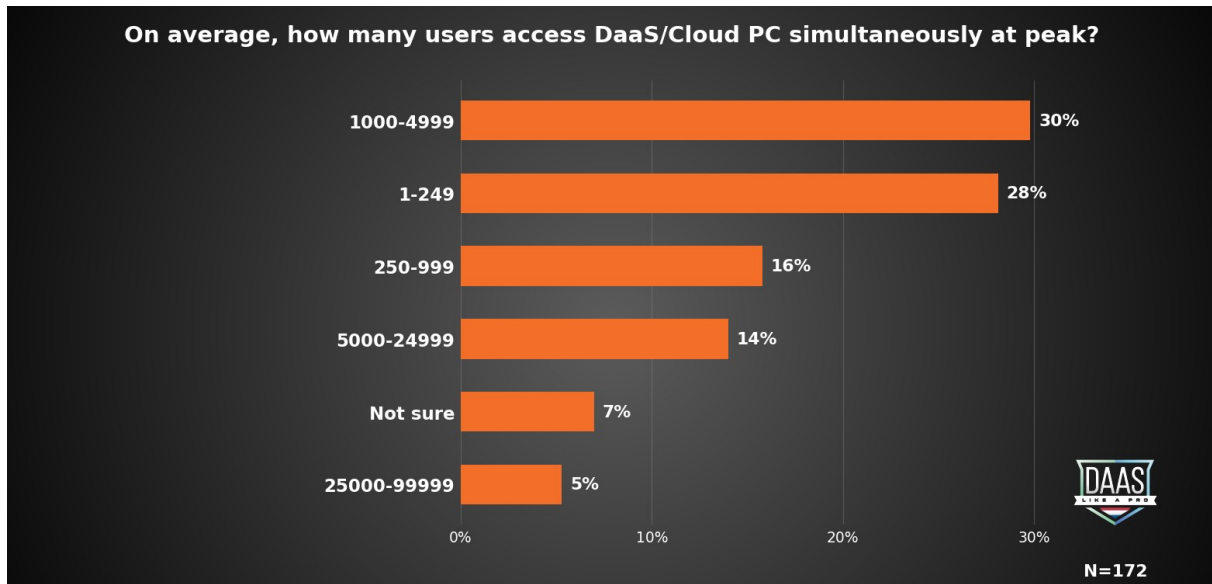


Source: DAAS/VDI Like a Pro State of the Union surveys, 2018–2026 editions. Question wording evolved from "public cloud/VDI challenges" (2018–2021) to "DaaS/Cloud PC adoption challenges" (2022–2026); Cost is the consistent core category throughout.



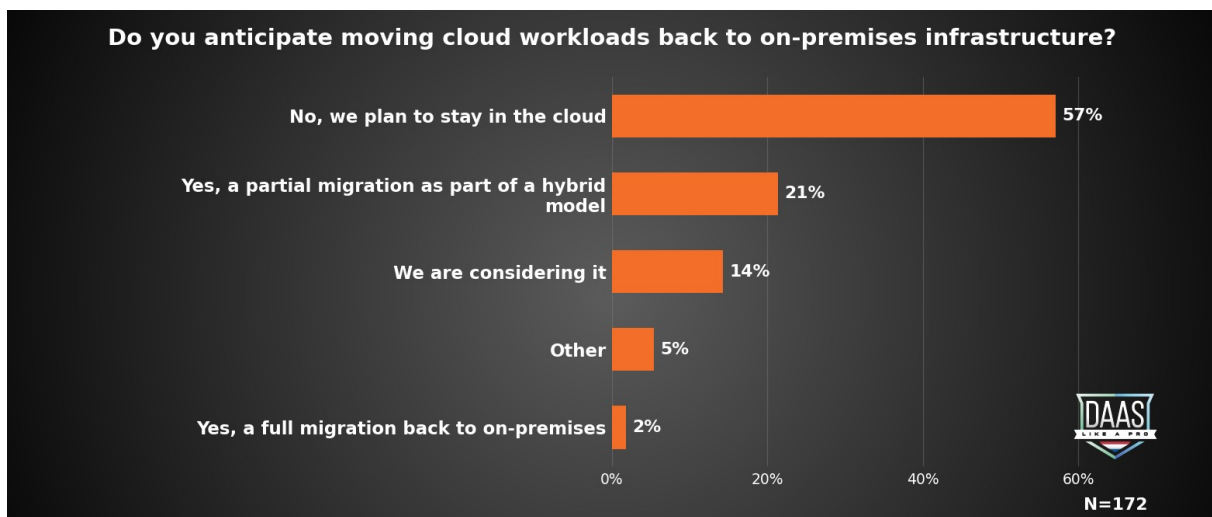
Peak concurrent usage

Peak concurrent usage is concentrated in the small-to-mid range: 30% of organizations see 1,000–4,999 simultaneous users at peak, and 28% see 1–249. Larger deployments of 5,000+ concurrent users still make up a meaningful share (19% combined), confirming that DaaS continues to scale across both small teams and large enterprise estates.



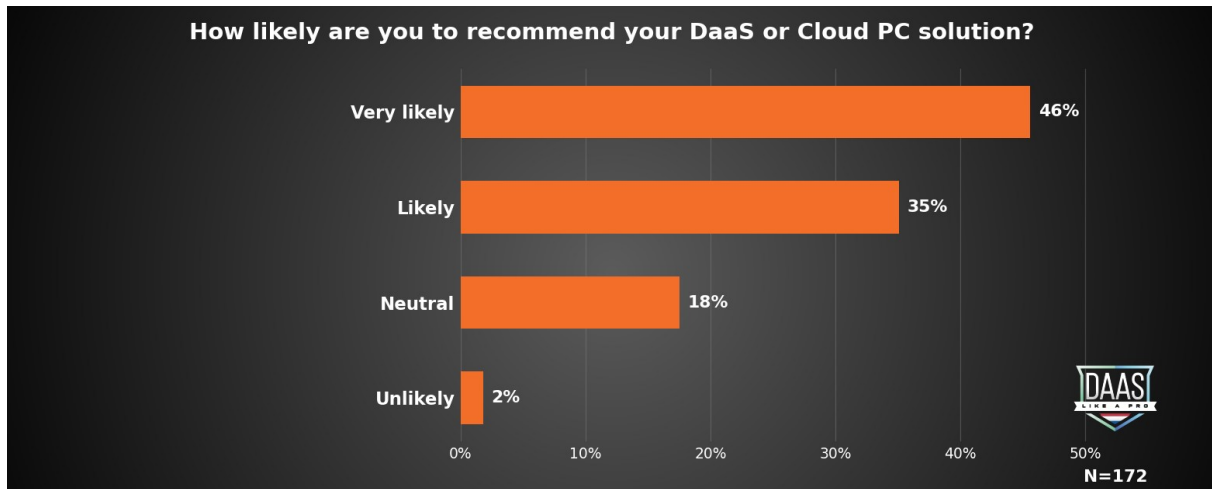
Cloud commitment: hybrid or fully cloud?

57% of respondents plan to stay fully in the cloud with no plans to move workloads back on-premises, while 21% anticipate a partial migration back as part of a hybrid model and 14% are considering it. Only a small fraction (2%) plan a full migration back to on-premises infrastructure — reinforcing that, despite ongoing cost debates, the center of gravity for virtual desktops has firmly shifted to the cloud.



Satisfaction with DaaS / Cloud PC solutions

Satisfaction remains strong: 46% of respondents say they are “very likely” to recommend their DaaS or Cloud PC solution to a friend or colleague, and a further 35% say they are “likely” to do so. 18% are neutral, and only a small minority report being unlikely to recommend their solution.

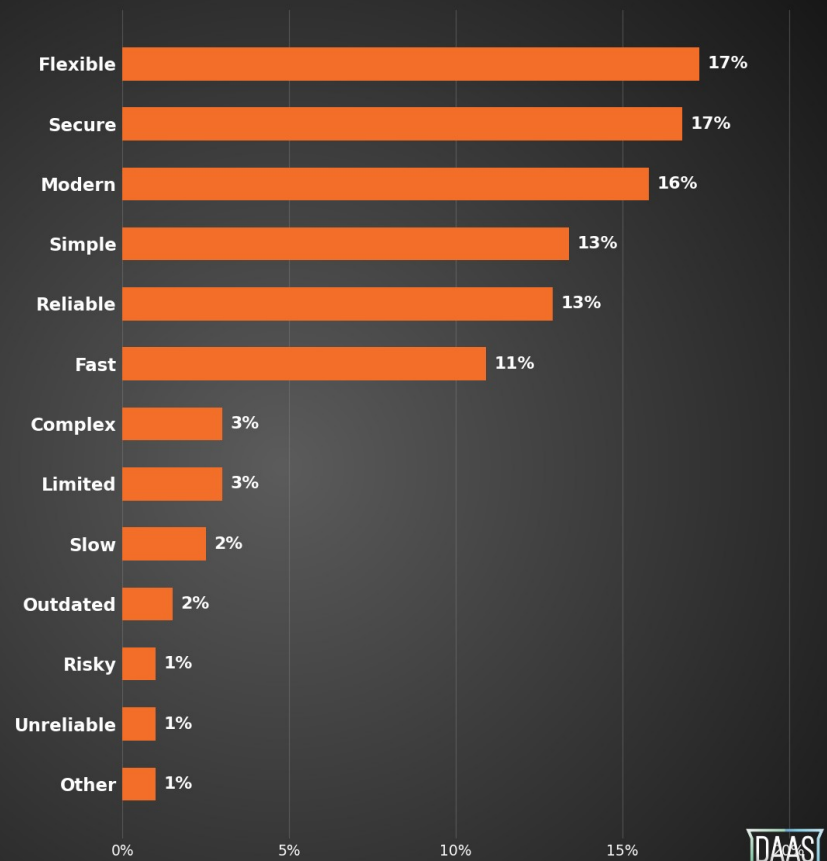


How respondents perceive DaaS / Cloud PC

“Flexible” (17%) again tops the list of words respondents use to describe DaaS or Cloud PC, closely followed by “Secure” (17%) and “Modern” (16%). Negative descriptors such as “Complex,” “Limited,” and “Slow” each register in the low single digits, suggesting that, for the large majority of respondents, DaaS and Cloud PC continue to deliver on their core promise.



Which of the following words best describe DaaS or Cloud PC?



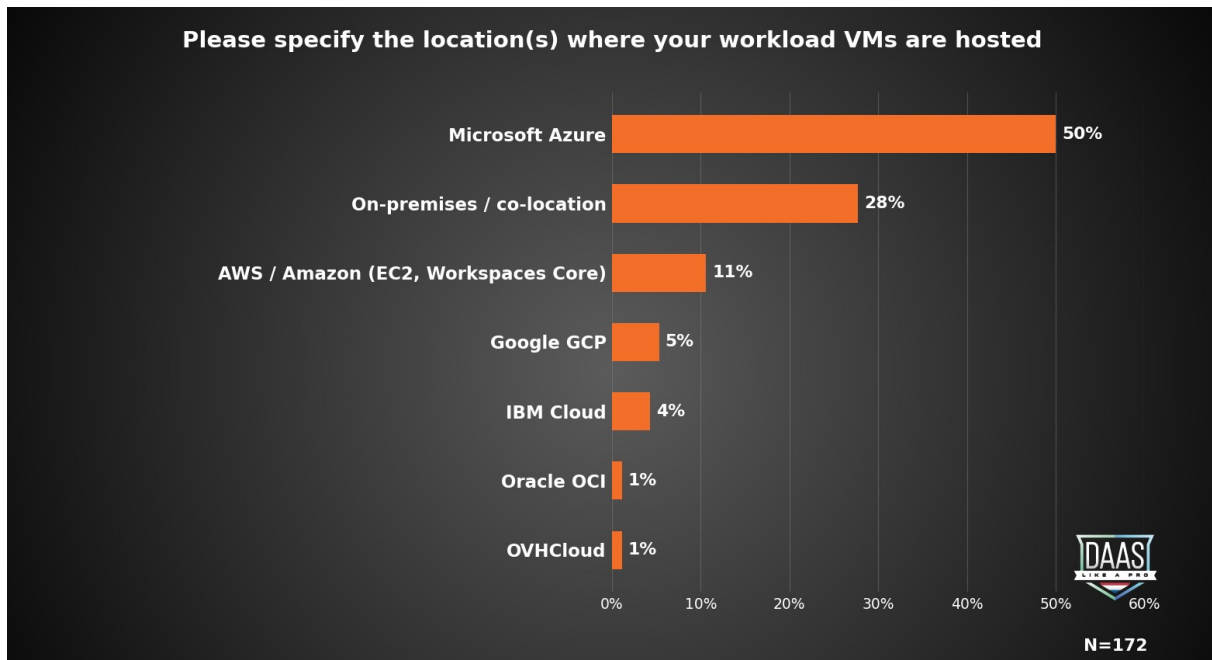
N=172

DaaS configuration

This chapter explores how organizations configure and run their DaaS and Cloud PC environments — from hosting location and hypervisor choice to VM sizing, GPU adoption, and the balance between published applications and full virtual desktops.

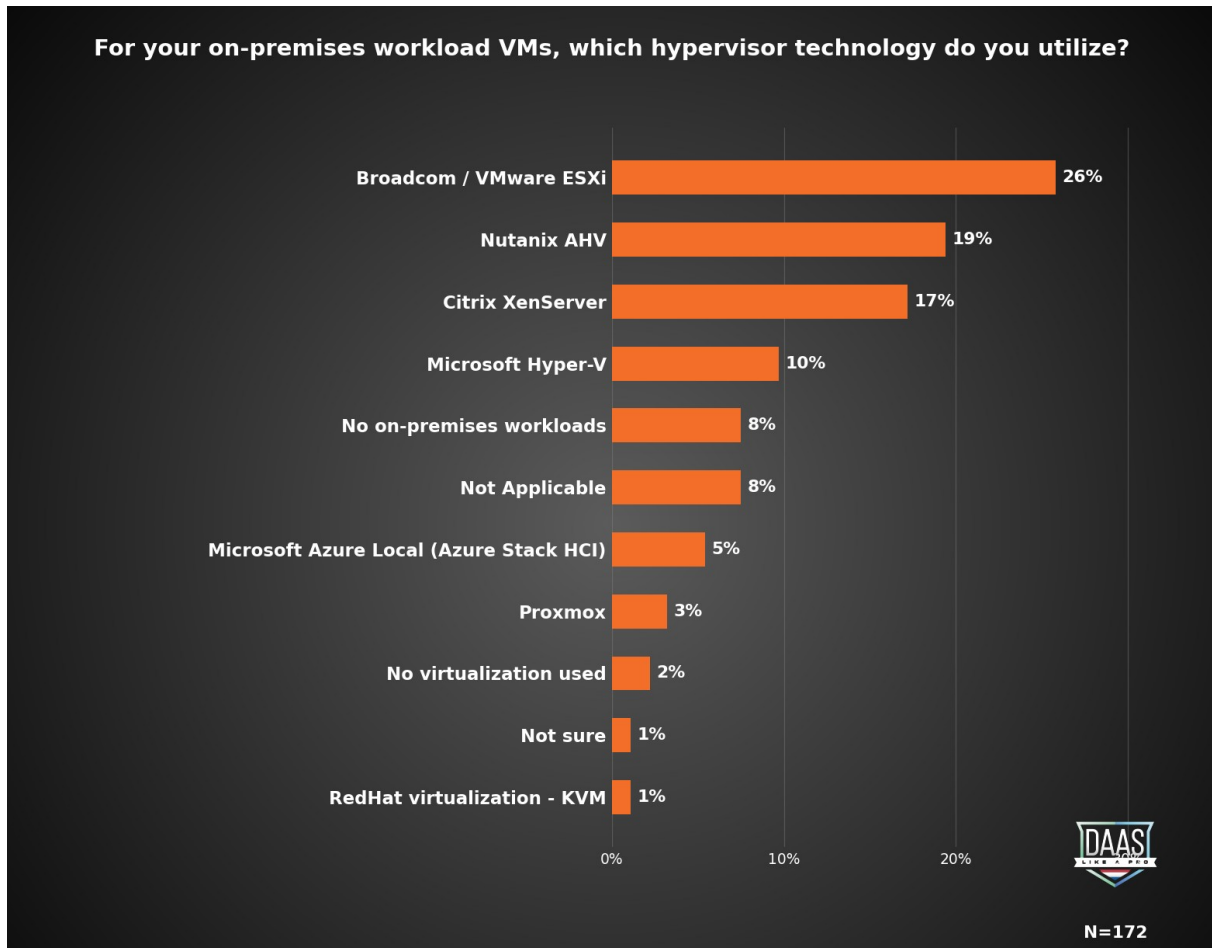
Workload hosting locations

Microsoft Azure hosts the majority of workload VMs at 50%, with on-premises/co-location still representing a significant 28% share — confirming that hybrid deployments remain common even as cloud-first strategies dominate. AWS (11%) holds a solid but distant third position, with Google GCP, IBM Cloud, Oracle OCI, and OVHCloud making up the remainder.

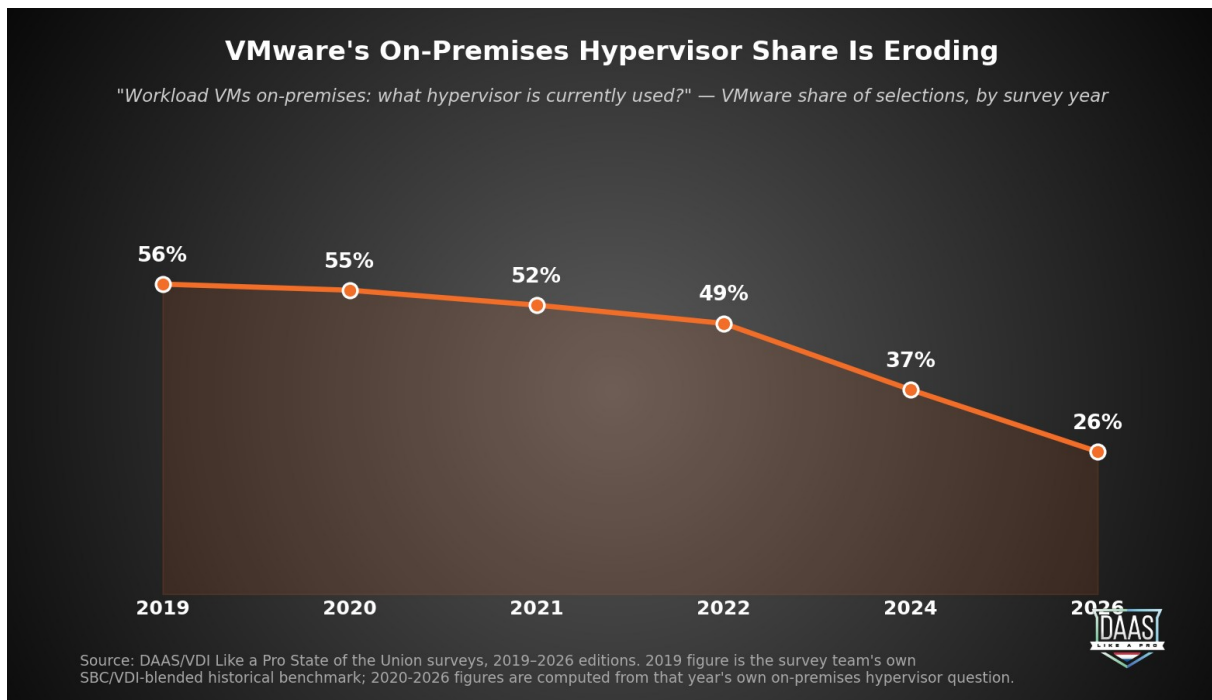
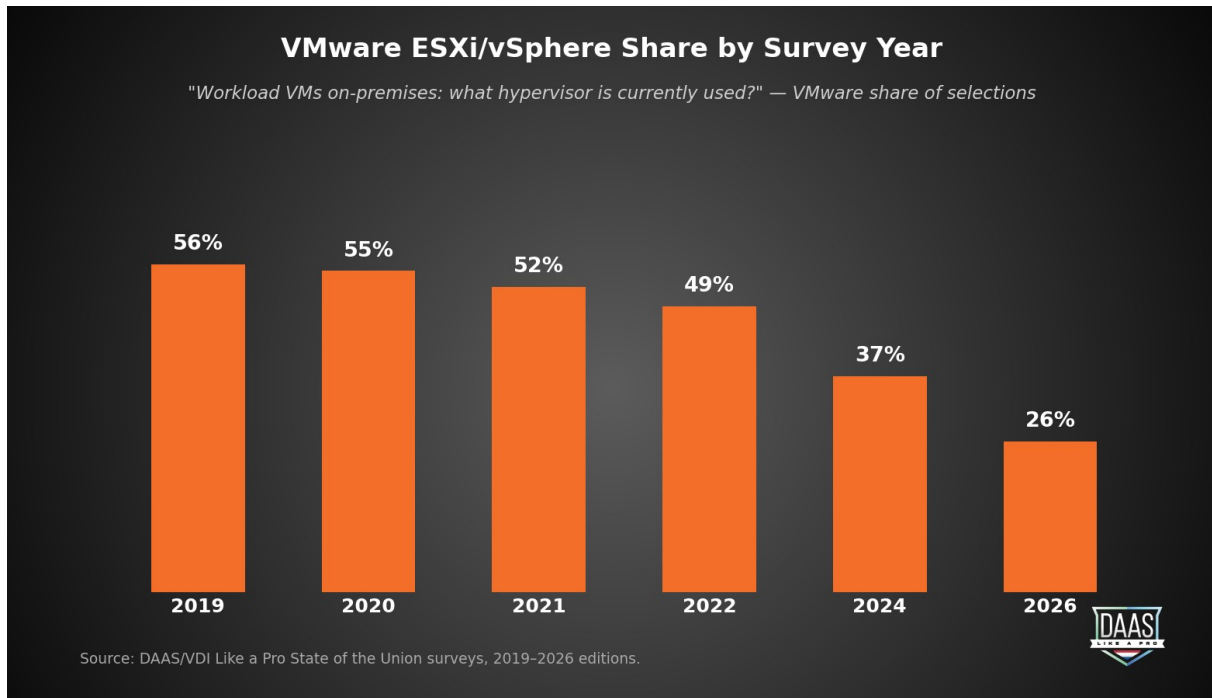


On-premises hypervisor technology

Among respondents who still run on-premises workloads, Broadcom/VMware ESXi leads with 26%, followed by Nutanix AHV (19%) and Citrix XenServer (17%). Microsoft Hyper-V (10%) and Microsoft Azure Local (Azure Stack HCI) round out the leading platforms. A notable share of respondents report having no on-premises workloads at all, reflecting the continued shift toward cloud-hosted virtual desktops.

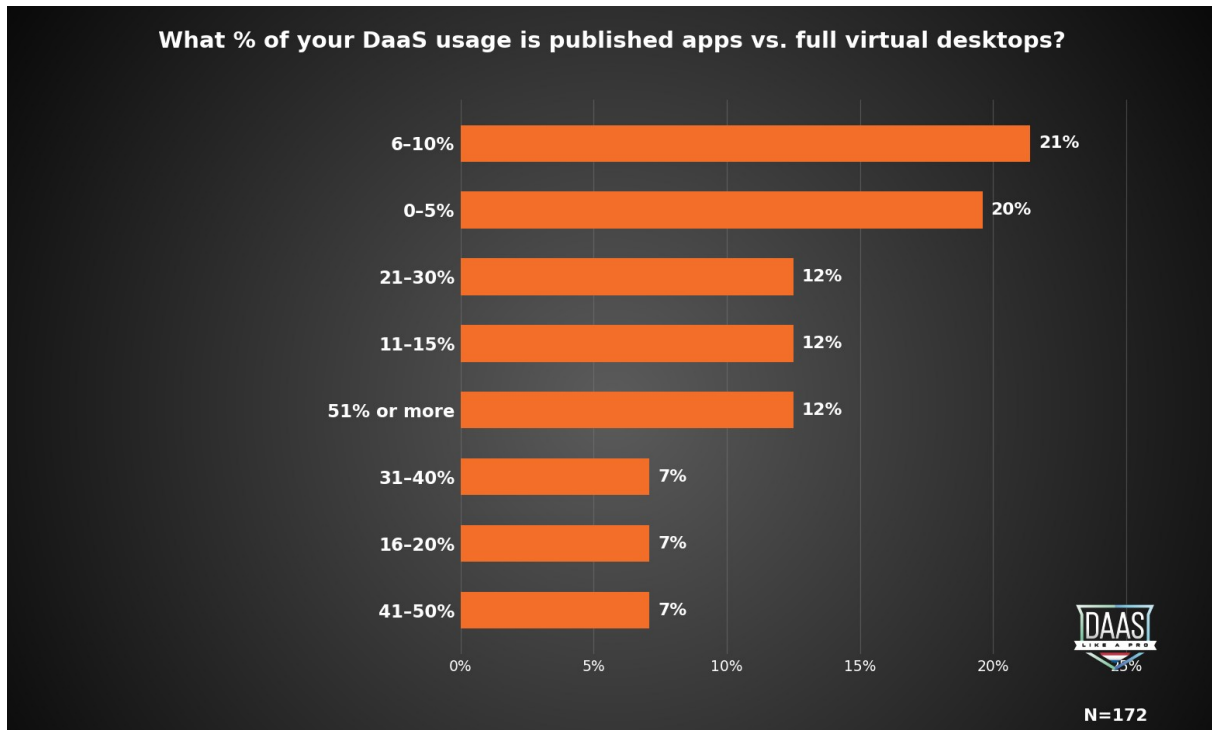


VMware's share of on-premises hypervisor selections has fallen in every single survey edition since 2019, from 56% down to just 26% in 2026 — a decline that accelerated sharply after the Broadcom acquisition closed in late 2023. The multi-year view below tracks this long-running shift.



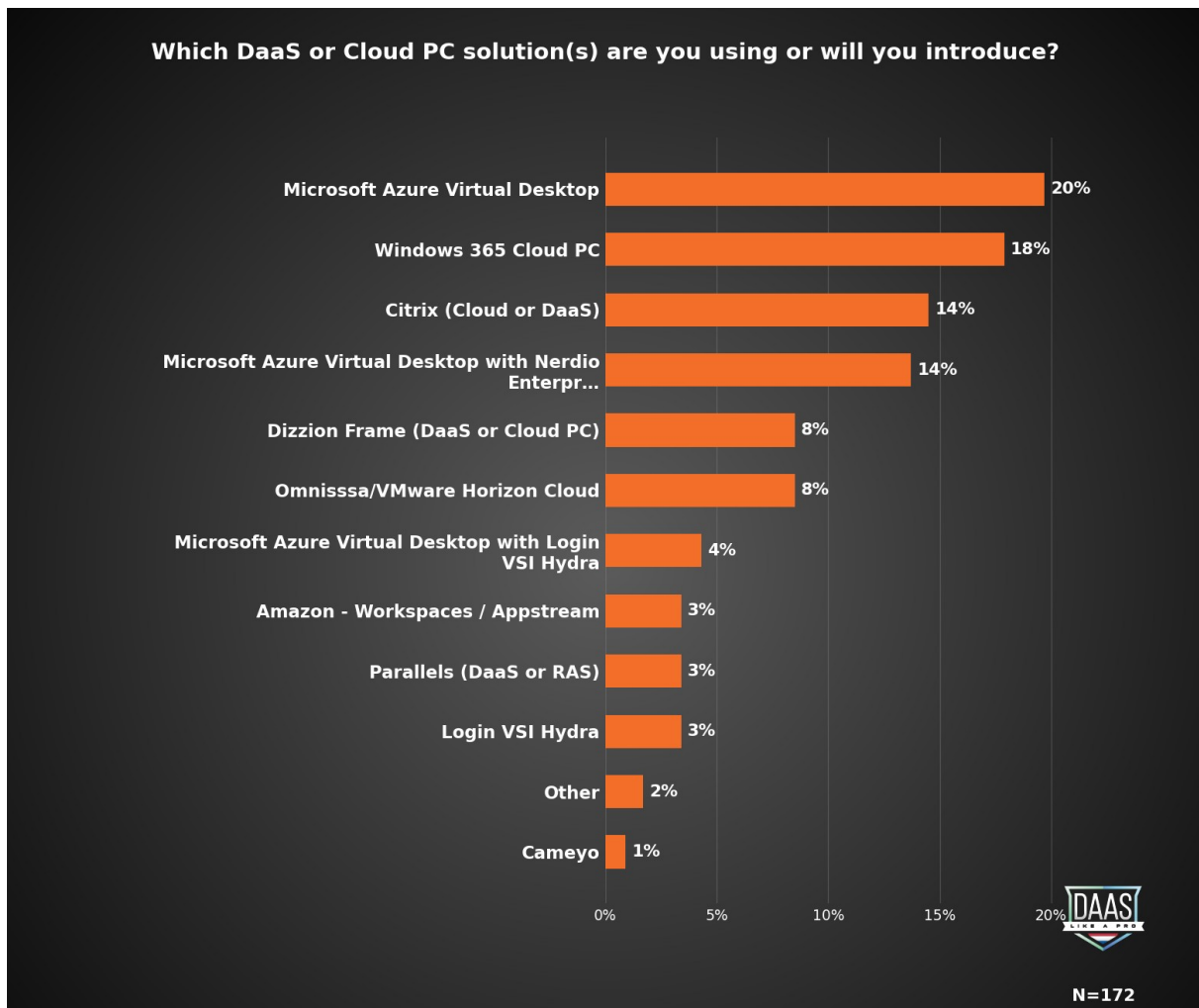
Published applications vs. full desktops

Application publishing remains a minority pattern for most organizations: 21% of respondents report that published applications make up just 6–10% of their DaaS usage, and a further 20% report 0–5%. At the other end of the spectrum, 12% of organizations already rely on published applications for 51% or more of their DaaS footprint — showing that while full desktops still dominate on average, a meaningful cohort has fully embraced an app-centric model.



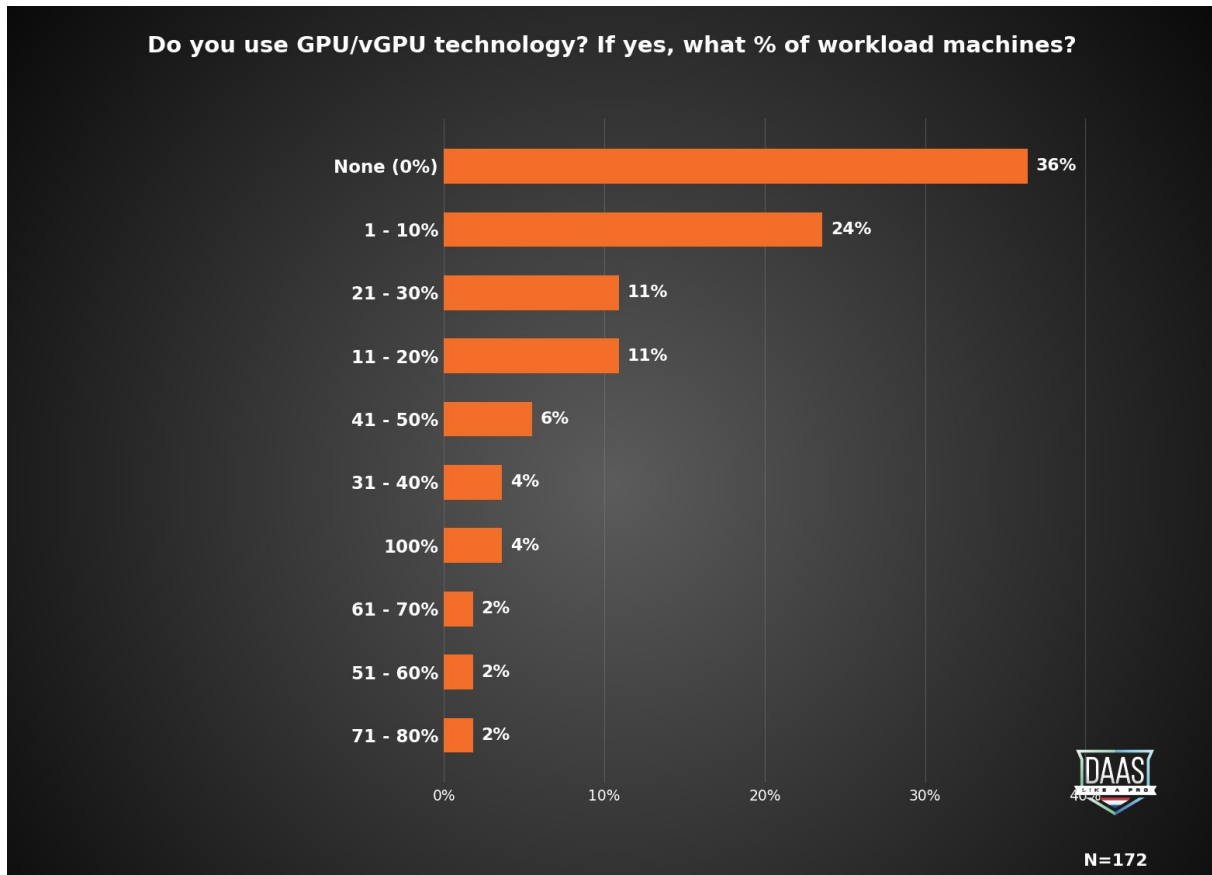
DaaS / Cloud PC solutions in use

Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop remains the most widely used platform at 20%, with Windows 365 Cloud PC close behind at 18%. Citrix (Cloud or DaaS) holds 14%, and Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop combined with Nerdio Manager for Enterprise accounts for a further 14% — together confirming AVD, in its native and Nerdio-managed forms, as the center of gravity of the Microsoft ecosystem. Dizzion Frame and Omnissa/VMware Horizon Cloud each maintain a solid share among the alternative platforms.



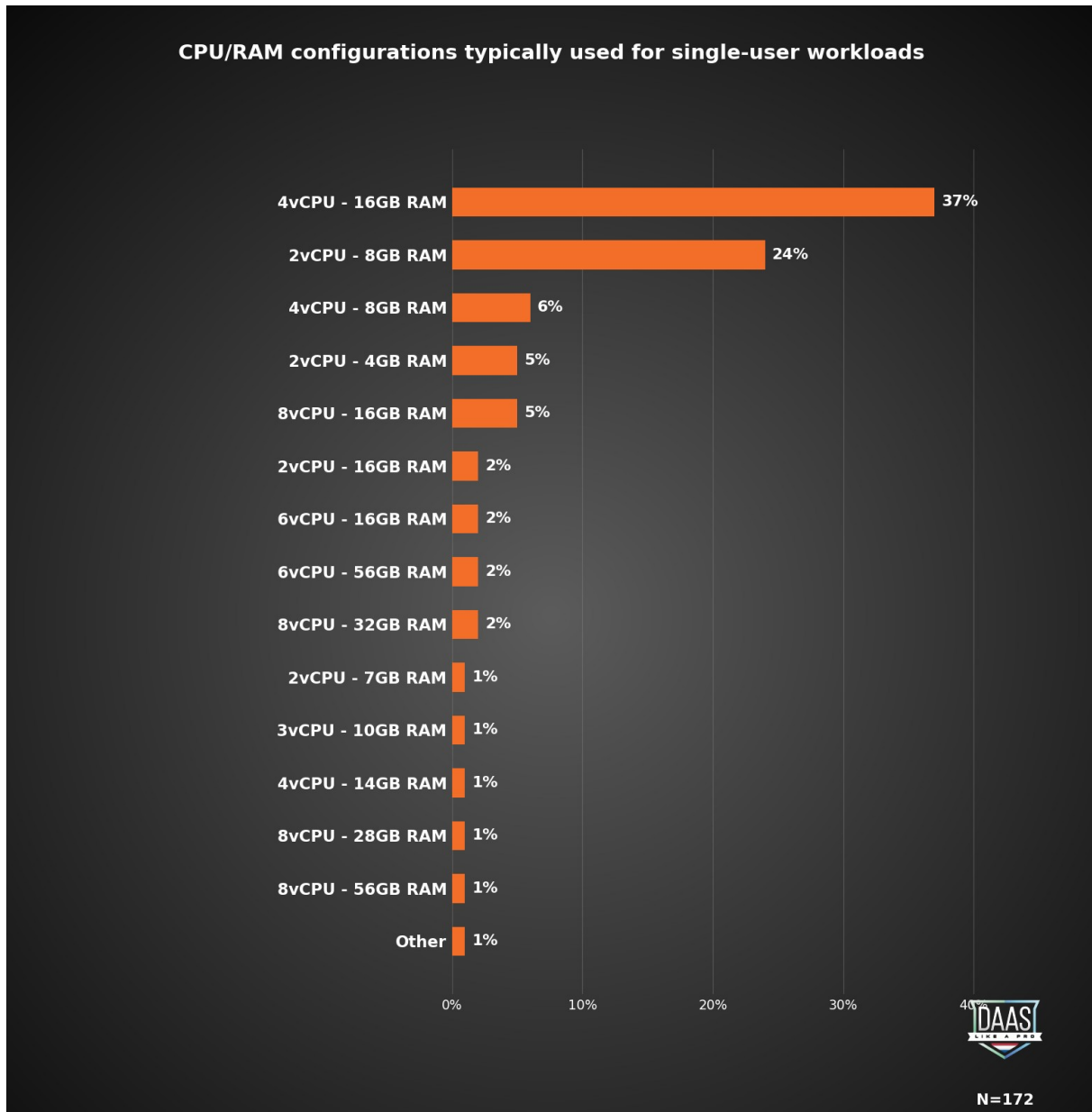
GPU / vGPU adoption

GPU adoption remains limited: 36% of respondents run no GPU or vGPU-enabled workloads at all, and a further 24% keep GPU-enabled machines to just 1–10% of their estate. Only a small minority have adopted GPU acceleration at scale, indicating that graphics-intensive workloads continue to be a specialized rather than mainstream use-case within DaaS and Cloud PC deployments.



Single-user virtual machine sizing

For single-user workloads, 4vCPU / 16GB RAM has become the clear standard, used by 37% of respondents, followed by 2vCPU / 8GB RAM at 24%. Together these two configurations account for roughly 61% of all single-user sizing choices, reflecting continued growth in baseline resource requirements driven by security agents, browsers, and collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams.

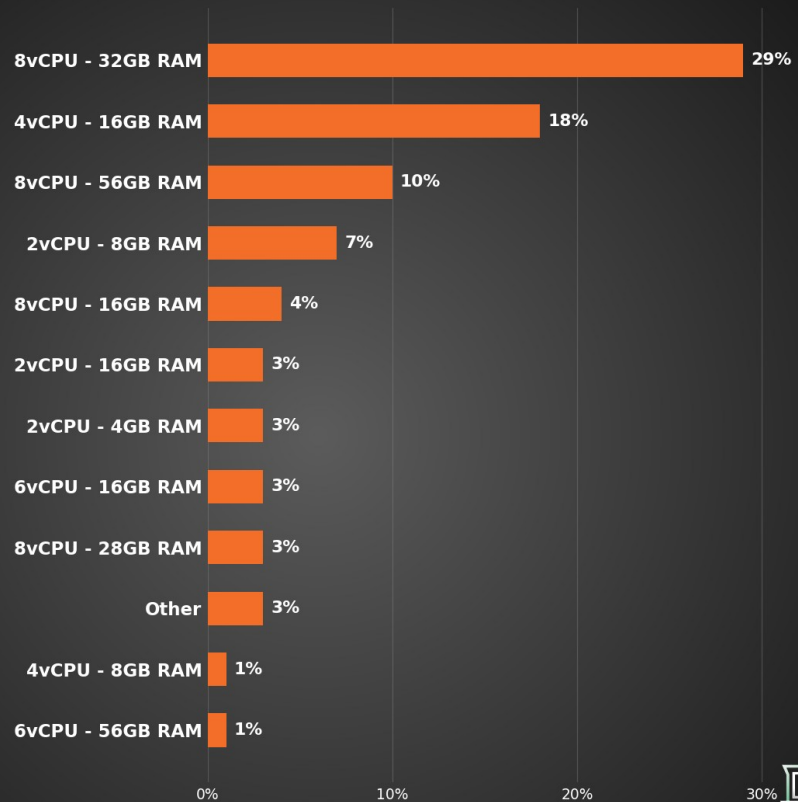


Multi-user virtual machine sizing

Multi-session/multi-user workloads have scaled up accordingly: 8vCPU / 32GB RAM is now the most common configuration at 29%, followed by 4vCPU / 16GB RAM at 18% and 8vCPU / 56GB RAM at 10%, reflecting continued growth in baseline resource requirements for shared multi-session hosts.



CPU/RAM configurations typically used for multi-user workloads



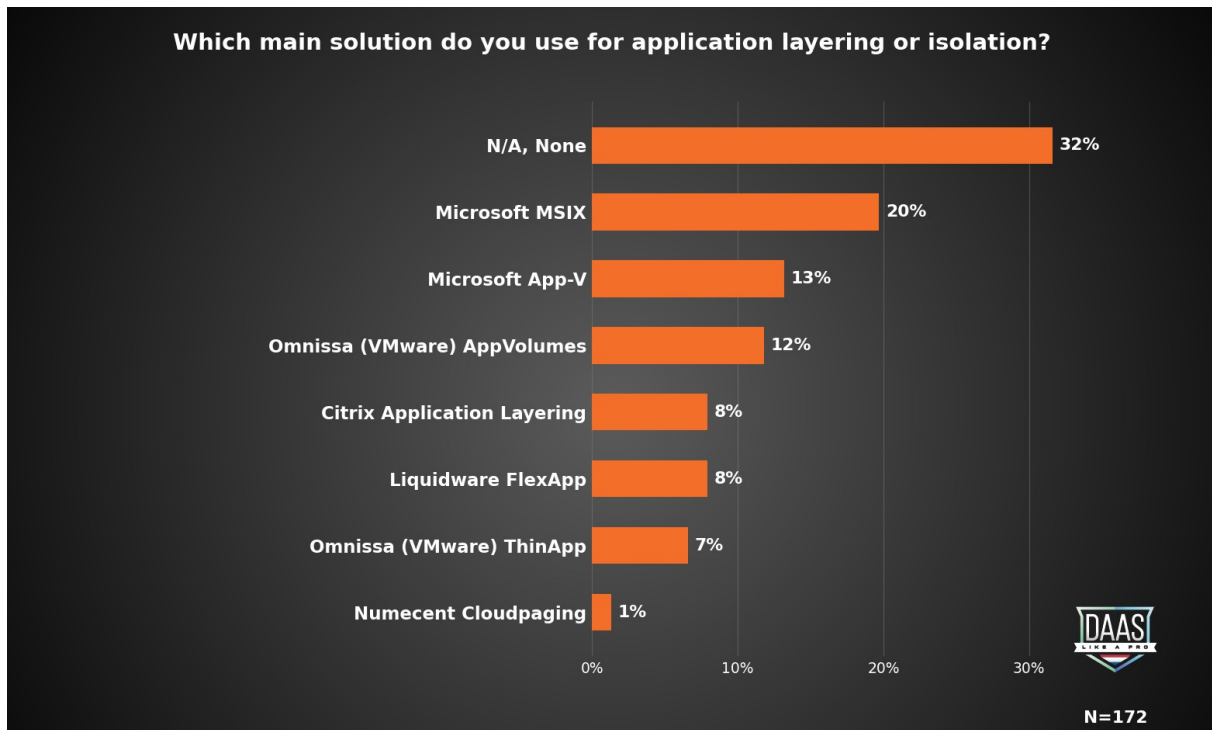
N=172

Value-add solutions & management

This chapter covers the complementary tooling organizations layer on top of their DaaS and Cloud PC deployments — application layering and isolation, secure browsing, OS/application management, Digital Employee Experience (DEX) monitoring, and the root causes behind end-user support tickets.

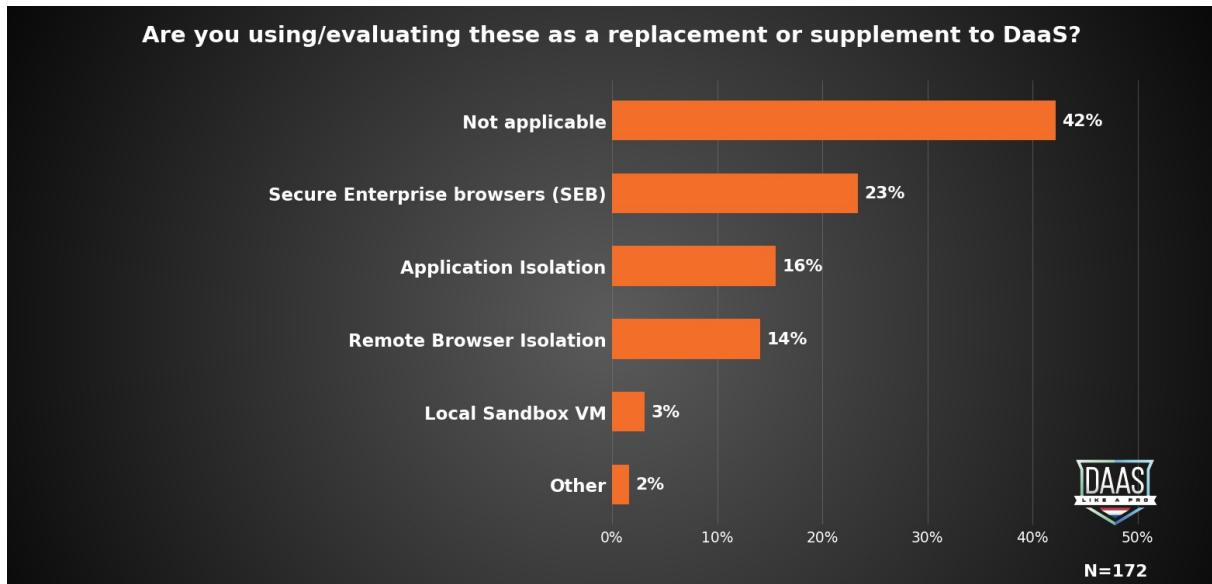
Application layering and isolation

32% of respondents use no application layering or isolation solution at all. Among those who do, Microsoft MSIX leads with 20%, followed by Microsoft App-V at 13% — notable given App-V's end-of-life status — and Omnissa (VMware) AppVolumes and Citrix Application Layering each holding meaningful shares.



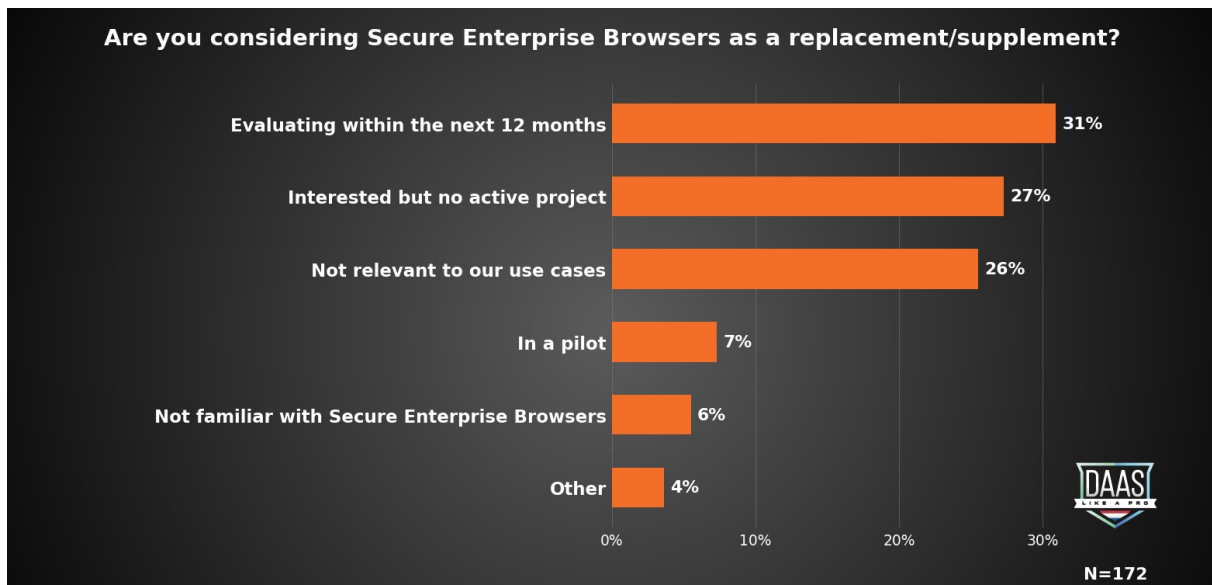
Replacement or supplement solutions

When asked whether they are using or evaluating alternative access models, 42% of respondents say this is not applicable to them. Among those exploring alternatives, Secure Enterprise Browsers lead at 23%, followed by Application Isolation solutions (16%) and Remote Browser Isolation (14%) — pointing to browser-centric security as an increasingly important complement to full DaaS deployments.



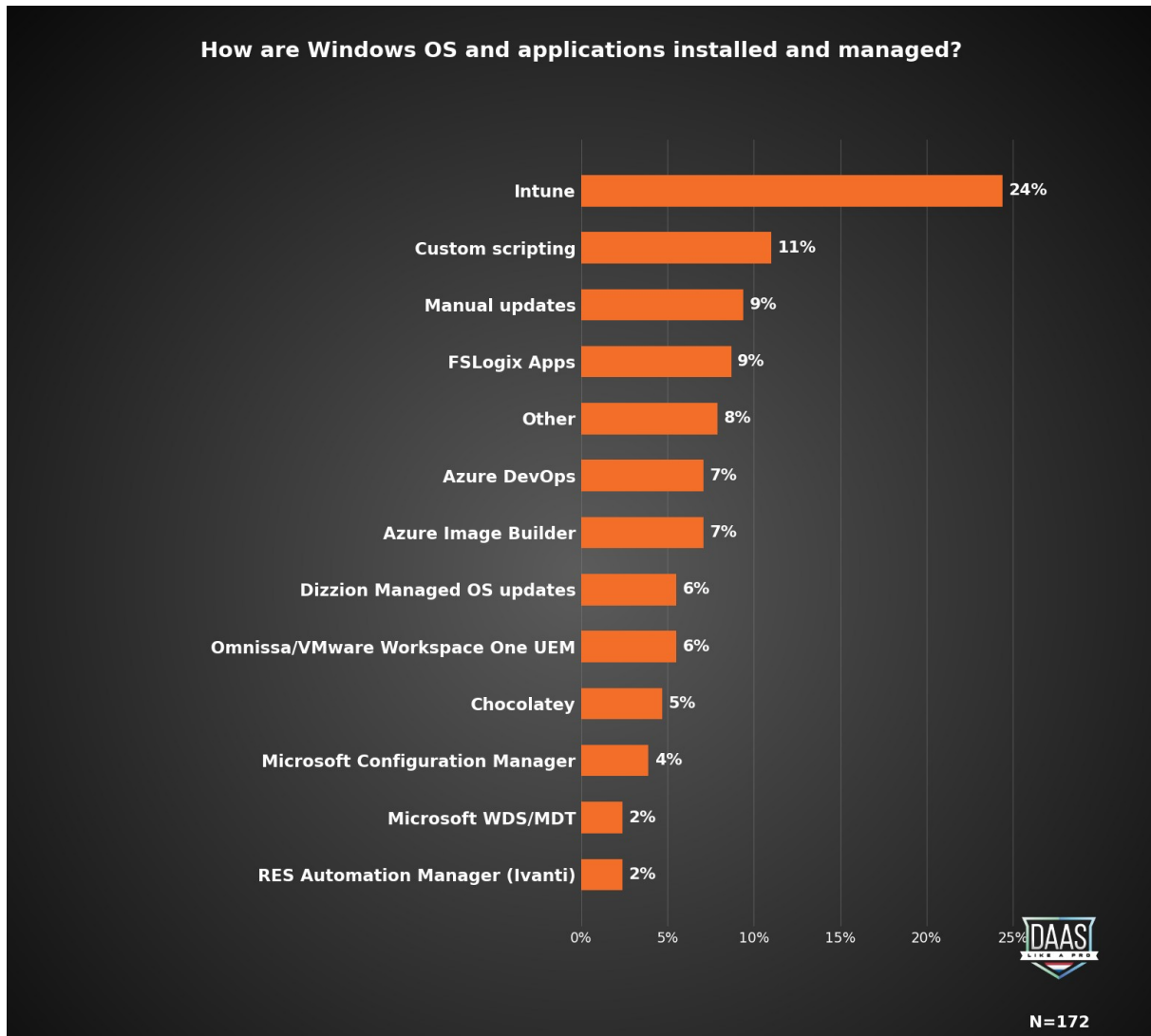
Secure Enterprise Browsers

Interest in Secure Enterprise Browsers (SEB) as a replacement or supplement to DaaS/Cloud PC is building steadily: 31% of respondents are evaluating SEB within the next 12 months, and a further 27% are interested but have no active project yet. 26% consider SEB not relevant to their use-cases, while only a small minority remain unfamiliar with the category — suggesting SEB awareness has become mainstream even where adoption has not yet followed.



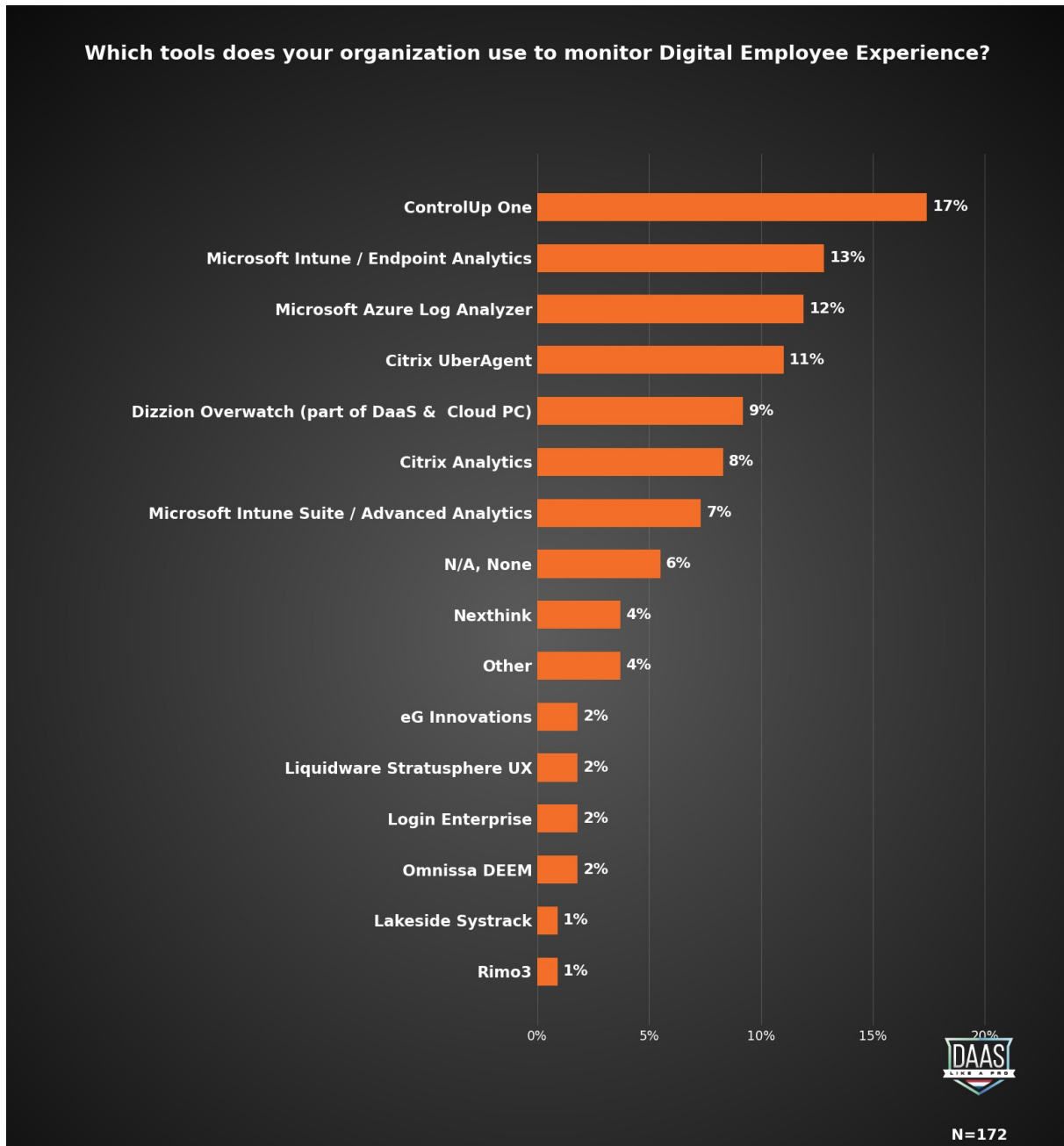
OS and application deployment

Microsoft Intune is now the leading method for installing and managing Windows OS and applications in DaaS/Cloud PC environments, used by 24% of respondents — well ahead of custom scripting (11%) and manual updates (9%). This marks a continued shift away from image-centric management toward modern, cloud-native endpoint management.



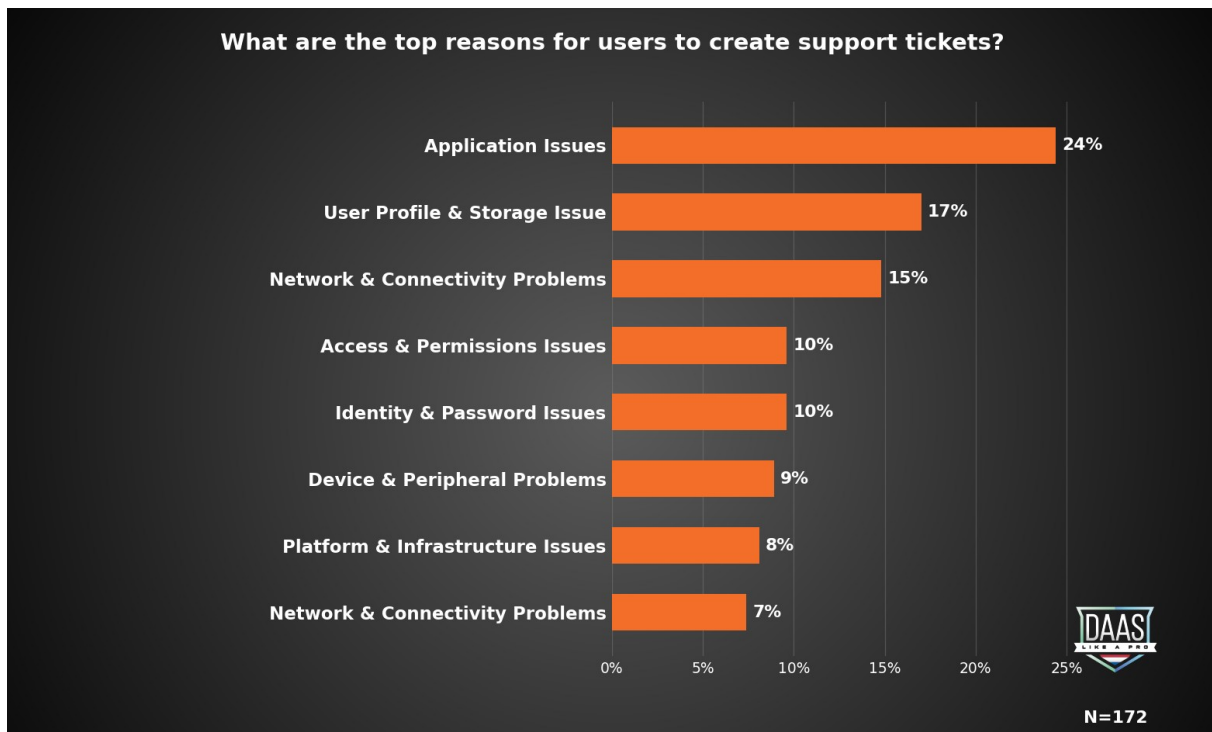
Digital Employee Experience (DEX) monitoring

ControlUp One is the most widely used DEX monitoring tool at 17%, followed by Microsoft Intune / Endpoint Analytics (13%), Microsoft Azure Log Analyzer (12%), and Citrix UberAgent (11%). The DEX tooling market remains fragmented, with more than a dozen additional vendors each holding a modest share — reinforcing that organizations still rely on a mix of point solutions rather than a single consolidated platform.



What drives support tickets

Application issues — crashes, slowness, and features not working — are the number one driver of support tickets, cited in 24% of selections. User profile and storage issues (17%) and network/connectivity problems on the last mile (15%) round out the top three. Identity/password issues and access/permissions problems each contribute a further meaningful share, underscoring that application health and identity remain the two biggest levers for reducing support volume.

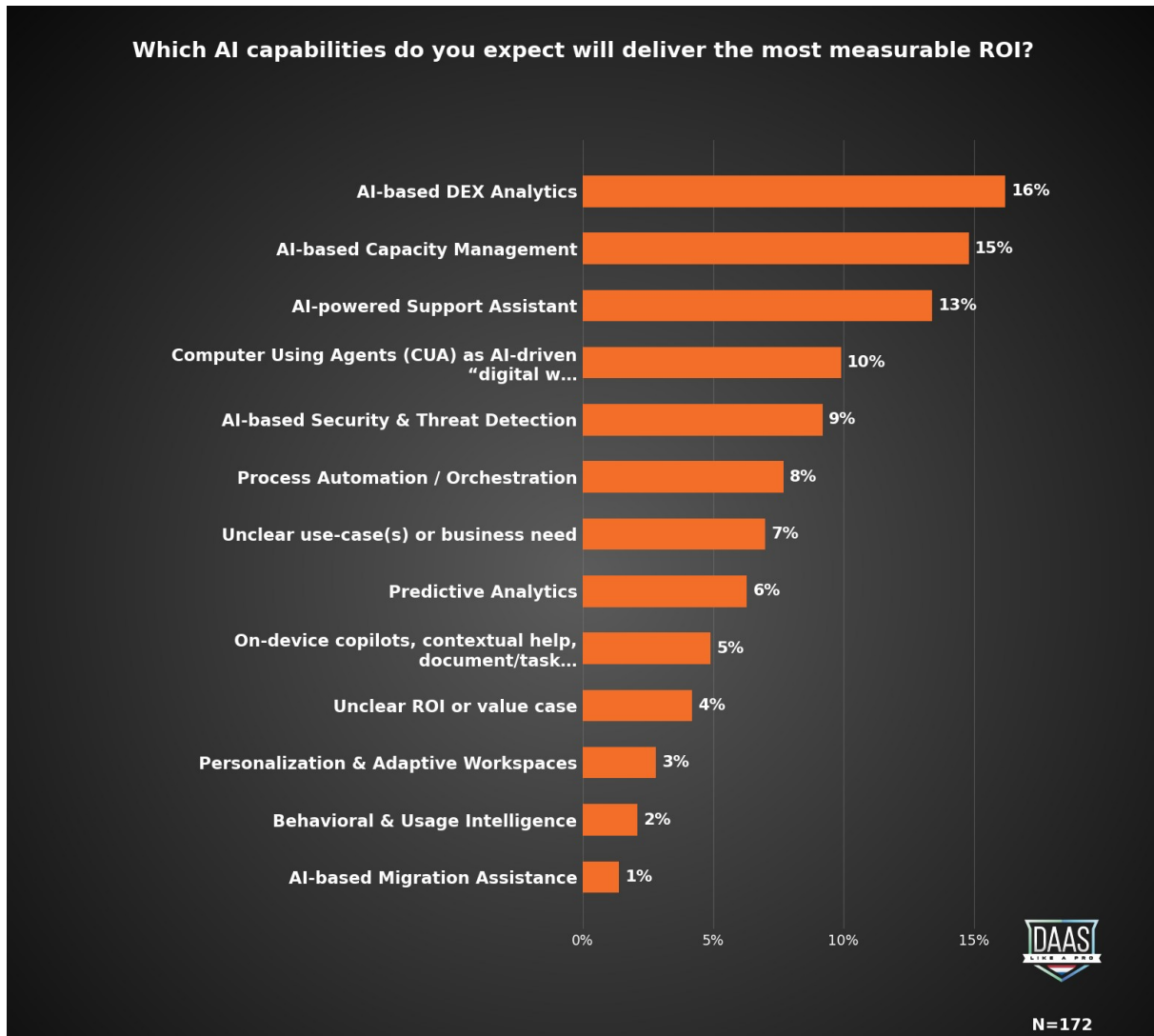


The role of AI in DaaS and Cloud PC

For the first time, this year's survey asked respondents directly where they expect AI to deliver measurable return on investment inside virtual desktop, DaaS, and Cloud PC environments — and what risks concern them most as AI adoption accelerates.

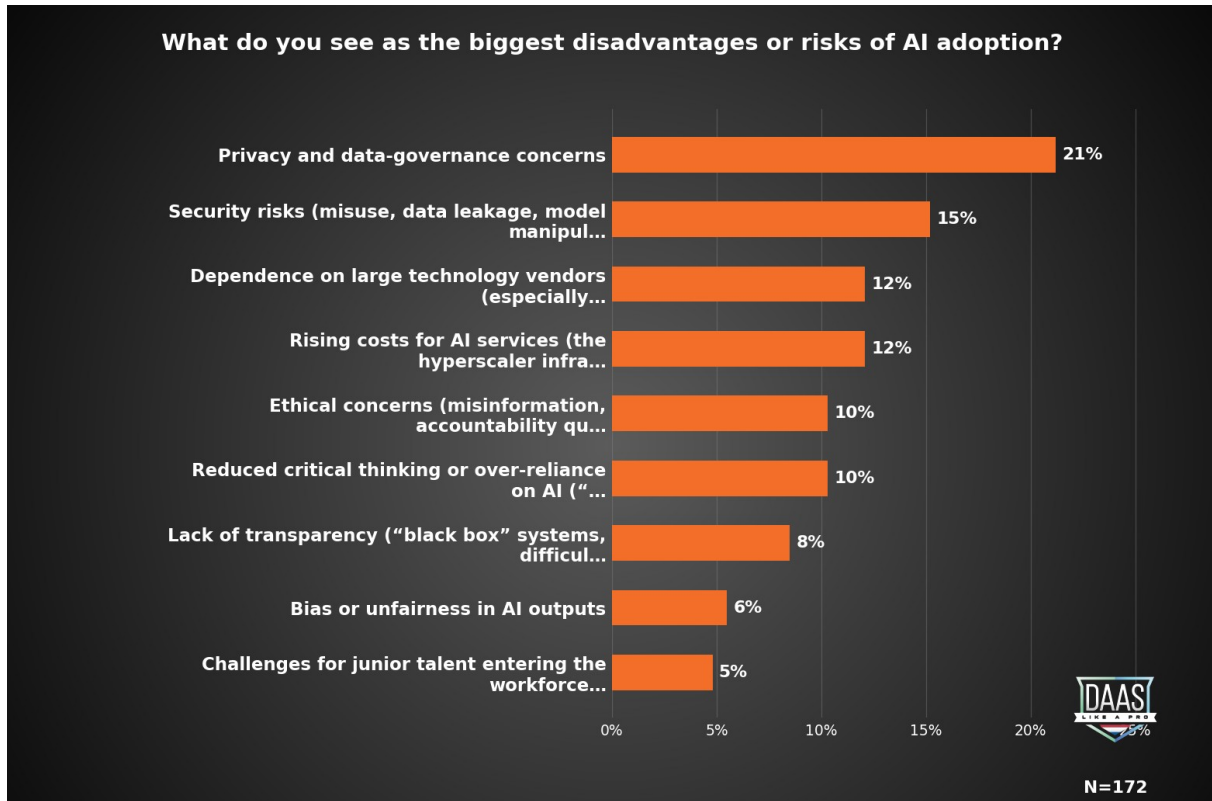
Where AI is expected to deliver the most ROI

AI-based Digital Employee Experience (DEX) analytics — proactive issue detection, sentiment scoring, and experience forecasting — tops the list at 16% of selections, followed by AI-based capacity management for predictive autoscaling and cost optimization (15%) and AI-powered support assistants for end-user troubleshooting (13%). Computer Using Agents (CUA) acting as AI-driven “digital workers” inside a virtual desktop already register 10% of selections, signaling early but real interest in agentic AI use-cases. Notably, a combined 11% of selections reflect unclear use-cases or unclear ROI — a reminder that AI enthusiasm still outpaces proven business cases for a meaningful share of the community.



Biggest risks of AI adoption

Privacy and data-governance concerns are the top-cited risk of AI adoption at 21%, ahead of security risks such as misuse, data leakage, and model manipulation (15%). Dependence on large technology vendors — especially US hyperscalers — and rising costs for AI services are tied at 12% each, while ethical concerns and reduced critical thinking / over-reliance on AI are tied at 10% each. Together, these findings suggest that governance, cost, and vendor dependency — not just technical risk — are shaping how IT leaders approach AI in the EUC space.



Open questions

In this chapter, we delve into the open-ended responses gathered from this year's survey. These answers offer a deeper, more candid view of participants' roadmaps and frustrations than the quantitative data alone can provide.

Roadmap priorities for 2026–2028

Respondents described a wide range of EUC, DaaS, and Cloud PC initiatives planned for the 2026–2028 period. Several clear themes emerged:

- Security and secure access — several respondents highlighted enforcing secure access across virtual and physical desktops to corporate apps and data as a top initiative, alongside broader security controls.
- Cost reduction and consolidation — reducing cost while improving performance was repeatedly mentioned, often paired with plans to reduce physical hardware and its ongoing maintenance burden.
- Microsoft-native consolidation — multiple respondents described active or planned migrations toward Microsoft Azure Virtual Desktop, in several cases specifically moving from Citrix to native Microsoft, from SCCM to Intune, and pairing AVD with Nerdio for management.
- AI and automation — DEX-driven AI automation was cited as a specific 2026 priority, reflecting the broader AI findings elsewhere in this report.
- Sovereignty and platform diversification — a smaller but notable group described interest in reducing dependence on Microsoft 365 and exploring greater technology sovereignty, alongside continued app-sharing expansion via Azure VDI.
- Steady-state operations — a number of respondents indicated their current setup already matches their strategic goals, with plans simply to keep scaling predictably as the organization grows.

Functionality gaps in DaaS and Cloud PC

When asked what functionality they feel is still lacking, respondents pointed to a mix of long-standing and newly emerging gaps:

- Application management — simplified, unified application management was the most direct ask, echoing the fragmented state of the application layering and deployment tooling market covered earlier in this report.
- Offline capability — offline mode and better use of on-premises resources remain a gap for organizations with intermittent or unreliable connectivity.
- Licensing and SKU flexibility — Cloud PC's fixed SKU and licensing model was called out as too rigid for some use-cases.
- Client experience details — specific friction points included the inability to drag and drop files between client desktop and VDI, missing support for Windows desktop shortcuts to shared applications, and local browser redirection for URLs clicked inside a remote session.
- Console-level access and troubleshooting — several respondents wanted deeper, vendor-supported console access to virtual machines for troubleshooting base images and end-user issues, particularly during network disruptions.



- Monitoring and support integration — better native monitoring and automated integration into existing helpdesk workflows were both flagged as gaps, with some noting these are already on their vendor's roadmap.
- Data locality and control — a recurring theme was the desire for greater control over data locality and less “cookie-cutter” DaaS, in favor of configurations that empower administrators rather than constrain them.

Conclusion

The EUC and DaaS landscape continues to evolve rapidly. Security, cost discipline, Microsoft-native consolidation, and early-stage AI automation are the clear strategic focus areas for 2026–2028, while application management, offline capability, and licensing flexibility remain the functionality gaps organizations most want addressed. By continuing to track both the numbers and the narrative behind them, we hope this report helps IT teams benchmark their own strategy against the wider community.

Thanks!

We would like to thank you for participating, sharing, and donating your valuable time to the community. We hope to see you back next year!

Christiaan, Dennis, Mark and Ruben