



Performance is a key issue when desktops are concerned, but system tuning is pointless, if users do not perceive any significant improvement. Common benchmarks do not give a direct indication of performance that is relevant for interactive applications, where the most important parameter is responsiveness perceived by users. We then developed a method for observing low-level system parameters while desktop operations take place, in order to describe correlations and hence trace a mapping. By analyzing such benchmarks, we can achieve an understanding of the low-level behavior of the system related to them.

So whenever a specific deployment of VDD is needed, such studies can assist system admins to put final users in a comfortable environment. In the [report Mapping system level to desktop level performance](#), we introduce this method and present some results obtained in applying it into our environment.

The report is primarily meant to describe a methodology to be used for understanding system behaviour from a user point of view and hence dimensioning VDD components and resources accordingly. But there are also some practical lessons learned during the experience. For example, some distros performed better than others. In particular we were impressed by GNU/Linux CentOS, whereas Debian Lenny and Gentoo 10 were just a confirmation of the excellent systems they are. Also Fedora and Windows (especially XP) did quite well during tests. But in general every dispatched desktop, when tested one by one, made it impossible to understand that they were not physical and local. Individual utilization performs very well, and so does group utilization when users are well distributed on different virtual machines. We discovered, though, that the number of concurrent users using the same virtual machine is critical and we learned how to dimension system in order to have up to 5 concurrent users working fine on the same dispatched machine. More details can be found in the report. Enjoy the reading!