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A Breakdown of Citrix App Layering Features by Edition

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5-6 minutes

From the moment we [announced the Unidesk acquisition](#) back in January, the response has been truly incredible. Every customer and partner that I have talked with about this software layering technology has shown strong interest in it — and for good reason. It allows IT to work more efficiently with image management and lifecycle operations, saving hours of effort, as well as reducing storage consumption, overall complexity and, ultimately, cost.

There are a number of existing [blog posts on Citrix App Layering](#) already (such as [Citrix App Layering Will Revolutionize IT](#)), but I wanted to take a moment to step back and explain in detail what capabilities of App Layering are available in the various editions and offerings.

To begin, let's summarize the types of layers that are available:

- **OS Layer** – A virtual disk layer containing the operating system. You can use an OS Layer with any compatible Platform and App Layers in any number of resulting Layered Images. You can create a new version of the OS Layer for every patch you need to roll out, and continue deploying all versions of the layer as you add

patches.

- **Platform Layer** – A virtual disk layer that includes configuration settings, tools, and other software required for Images to run on a particular platform. For example, a platform layer for XenServer would include the XenTools software.
- **App Layer** – A virtual disk layer containing one or more applications that you can use in any number of Layered Images. When publishing a Layered Image, you can combine an App Layer with the OS Layer used to create it, other App Layers, and a Platform Layer.
- **Layered Image** – A combination of an OS layer plus one or more platform and/or one or more app layers that are merged together to form a standard bootable virtual disk that can be used with Citrix Machine Creation Services (MCS), Citrix Provisioning Services (PVS), or another mechanism from a third party.
- **Elastic Layer** – An App Layer that is attached at logon to a XenApp server session or VDI machine based on user criteria. This allows simultaneous use of different applications from the same XenApp server as well as VDI flexibility that ultimately leads to resource consolidation and improved efficiency.
- **User Layer** – A writeable layer for use with Windows 10 or Windows 7 VDI instances that allows users to install applications in non-persistent environments. This provides user flexibility with administrative control in situations where dedicated VDI would traditionally be required.

Per the [XenApp and XenDesktop Feature Matrix](#), Citrix App Layering is available in all editions with the exception of XenApp Secure Browser Edition. This means that you can do the following

across any number of XenApp and XenDesktop sites in your environment:

- Create an unlimited number of OS, platform and application layers
- Create an unlimited number of layered images
- Create an unlimited number of elastic layers

XenApp and XenDesktop Platinum edition customers also benefit from:

- Multiple hypervisors and/or cloud connections (e.g. XenServer and Azure or XenServer and Hyper-V). Non-Platinum sites are limited to one hypervisor or cloud connection type.
- Multiple provisioning mechanisms (e.g. Machine Creation Services and Provisioning Services). Non-Platinum sites must select MCS or PVS and use it exclusively with Citrix App Layering.
- Multiple broker types/platforms (e.g. XenApp and XenDesktop with VMware Horizon View). Non-Platinum sites can only use App Layering within their XenApp and XenDesktop sites
- User Layers (currently available in Labs preview for Windows 7 and Windows 10)

What about Citrix Cloud? Citrix App Layering is a cloud service offering for all customers. Those customers using the XenApp and XenDesktop Service are entitled to Platinum-level features including all Citrix App Layering capabilities. Citrix App Layering also allows you to access the management console within Citrix Cloud (currently in Labs/preview) making it even easier to get started with the technology.

I hope this helps to clarify eligibility for Citrix App Layering. If you have any questions, feel free to post them below in the comments

section. Ready to take advantage of Citrix App Layering? Head over to [Citrix Cloud](#) and sign-in or create a new account to access your 60-day free trial. The Citrix App Layering Service includes full-feature functionality and eligible customers with active Customer Success Services can use this service for production rollouts.

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