

EPFL VDI Usage Best Practices & Recommendations

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Acronyms used in this Document

VDI	<p>Virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) is a technology that refers to the use of virtual machines to provide virtual desktops, like Windows or Linux.</p> <p>VDI hosts desktop environments and applications on a centralized server and deploys them to end-users on request.</p>
VDI Usage	<p>Remote work: Since VDI makes virtual desktops easy to deploy and update from a centralized location, this technology is used at EPFL to provide a great variety of courses.</p> <p>Bring your own device (BYOD): VDI is an ideal solution for environments that allow or require users to use their own devices. Since processing is done on a centralized server, VDI allows the use of a wider range of devices. It also offers better security, since data lives on the server and is not retained on the end client device.</p>
VDI Pool	<p>A VDI pool is a group of several virtual desktops (Windows or Linux) on which you're entitled.</p> <p>Virtual Machines are in essence machines that exist on a server, instead of under your desk. The pools define the hardware these VMs will run on.</p>
BYOD	<p>Bring your own device: Refers to being allowed to use one's personally owned device, rather than being required to use an officially provided device.</p>
Blast	<p>Blast is the VDI streaming technology at EPFL.</p> <p>Blast uses standardized encoding schemes, including JPG/PNG and H.264 for pixel encoding, and Opus for audio. These standard formats are supported natively in modern devices, browsers & mobile devices.</p>

Introduction

In order to have the best experience with Virtual Desktops at EPFL, please observe the following Best Practices:

Scenario 1: Bring your own device (BYOD): Personal Computer / Tablet (Mac, Linux, Windows, Android, iOS...).

- You want to bring your own device? No problem. Just be aware that VDI optimal performance is often reached with hardware less than 5 years old.

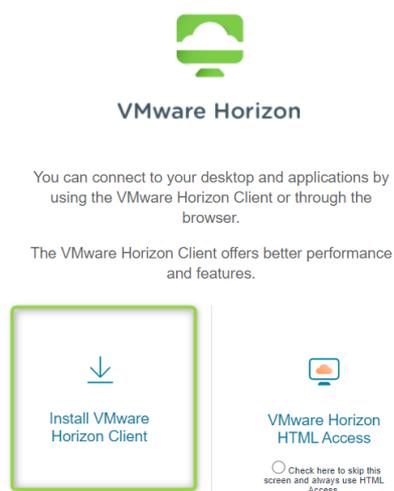
Scenario 2: Computer bought from EPFL Poseidon's Store:

- You just bought a new computer from Poseidon? Good. All Poseidon's machines are already fully compatible and optimized for the best VDI experience.
 - o *N.B: In both scenarios, try to keep your operating system, antivirus, Web browser and drivers (network, graphic card...) as updated as possible before connecting to your VDI session.*

Horizon Client

In order to access to EPFL VDI with your personal computer / tablet, download & install the latest VMware Horizon Client version for your system:

- Open a Web browser and go to <https://vdi.epfl.ch>
- Click on **Install VMware Horizon Client**. You'll be redirected to a Webpage.
 - o Choose the right version for your platform (Mac, Linux, Windows, etc...).



- o *N.B: Please keep your Horizon Client up-to-date. Some notifications will warn you if any update is available on Horizon Client.*

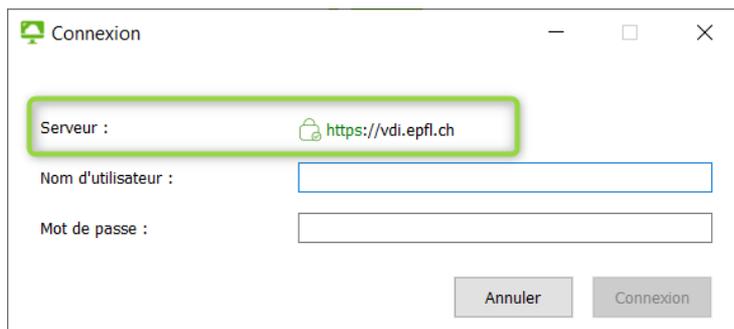
Network connection speed considerations

- *N.B: A network connection with 8 Mbits/sec. is a minimum for an average VDI experience (without 3D usage).*
 - o *Faster network speed may be needed for intensive 3D applications.*
- Before connecting to your VDI session, please close all other programs that might consume network bandwidth and compute resources.
- Close EPFL VPN when using VDI.
 - If VPN is On, performance will be degraded and limited to the VPN throughput for your session.
- You can connect your computer / tablet with following methods (If possible, select the most reliable method for the best experience).
 - o RJ 45 network cable (Consistent performance).
 - o WIFI hotspots (Consistent to variable performance).
 - o 4G / 5G Mobile Phone (Consistent to very variable performance).
 - o The connection quality depends on several parameters. Also, avoid sharing a mobile connection with other people when using your VDI session).

How to connect to your VDI?

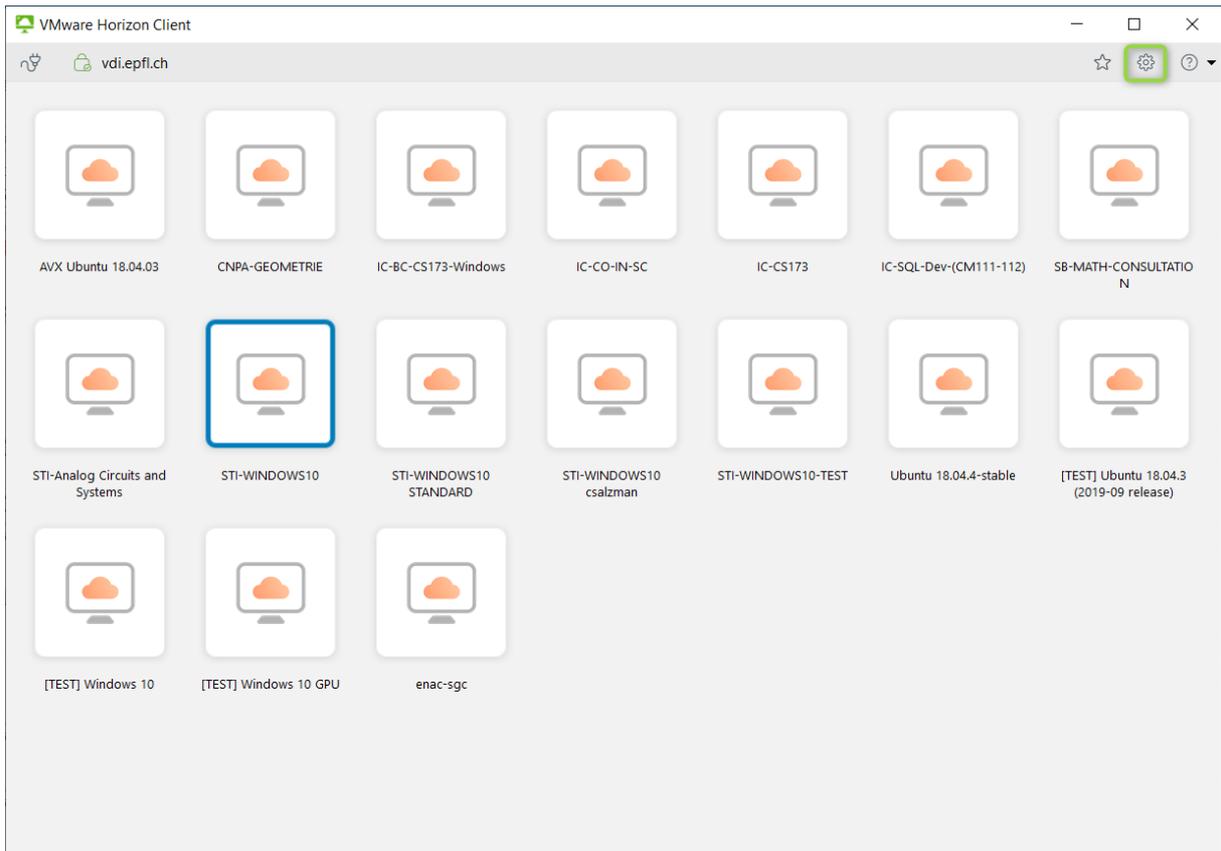
Horizon Client (v.2006 - Preferred Method)

- o For an optimal experience, do not change the default settings.
- o The connection server address is <https://vdi.epfl.ch>

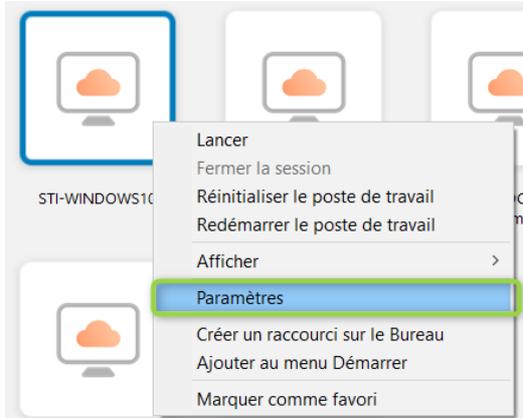


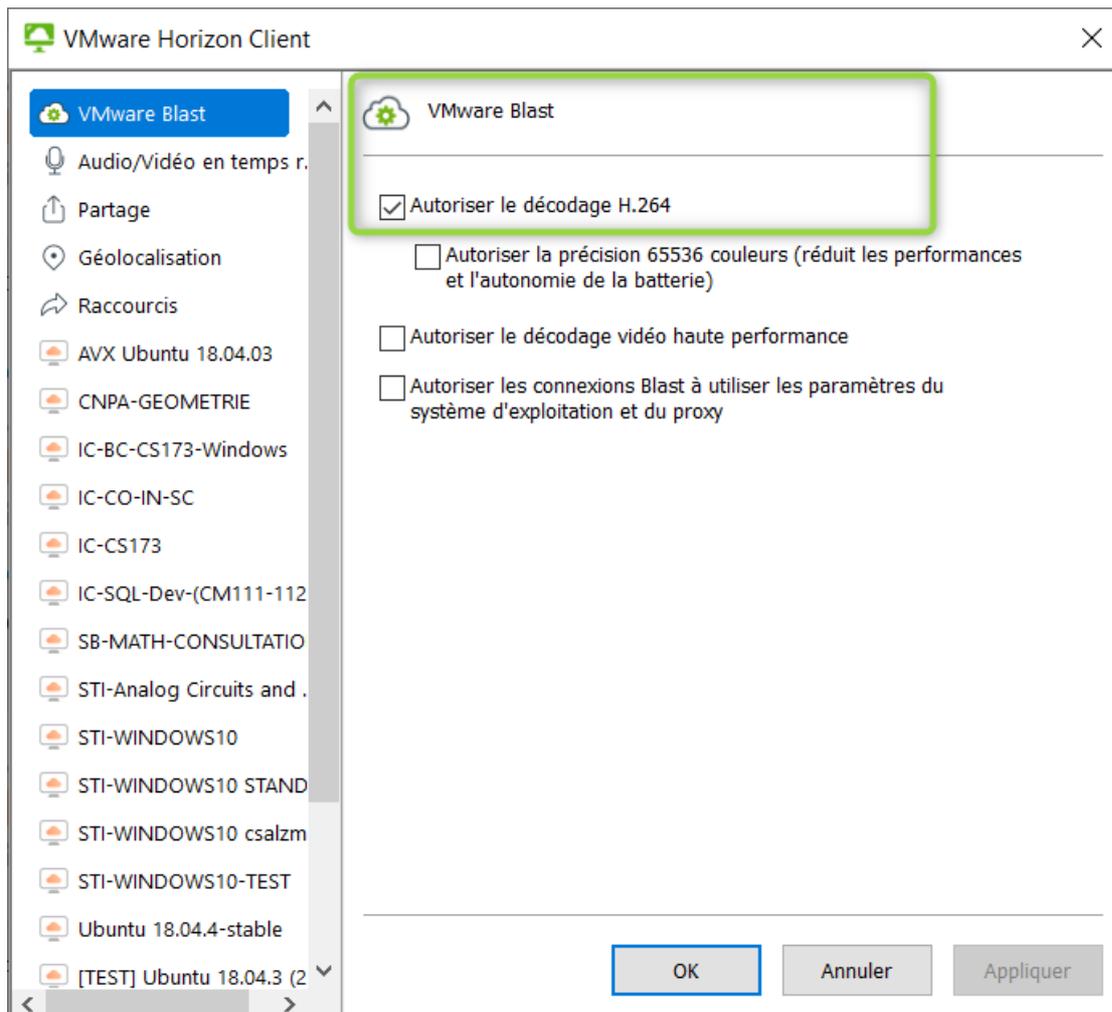
The image shows a screenshot of the Horizon Client connection dialog box. The title bar reads 'Connexion'. The 'Serveur' field is highlighted with a green border and contains the text 'https://vdi.epfl.ch'. Below it are two empty text input fields labeled 'Nom d'utilisateur' and 'Mot de passe'. At the bottom of the dialog are two buttons: 'Annuler' and 'Connexion'.

- Just enter your username and password and your pools will be **displayed**.



- **Right-clicking to a Pool / Parameters displays the Blast Options Menu.**





- **In the Blast Menu section, verify** that the first case « H.264 decoding » only is checked.
- If any other case or option is selected, performance will be degraded.

HTML5 (Alternate Connection Method)

- You can **connect** to your VDI session with any **modern HTML5 browser**, without the need to install **VMware Horizon Client**.
- Caution! HTML5 connection has some limitations:
 - Average performance vs Horizon Client
 - You cannot use USB redirection
 - You cannot use more than 1 screen
- Procedure:
 - **Open** your Web browser and browse to <https://vdi.epfl.ch>

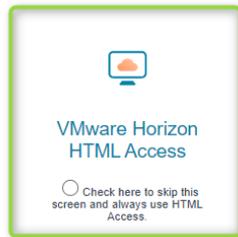


VMware Horizon

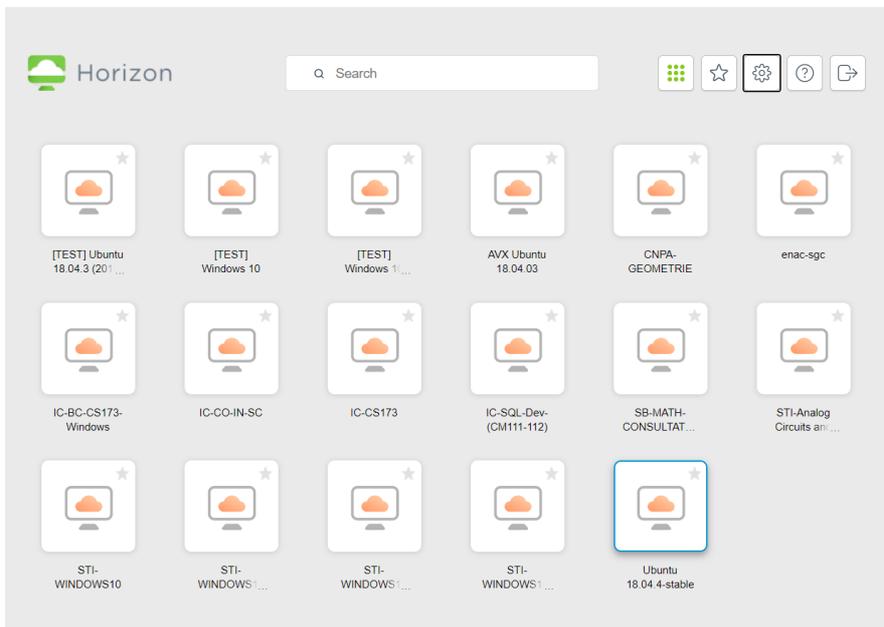
You can connect to your desktop and applications by using the VMware Horizon Client or through the browser.

The VMware Horizon Client offers better performance and features.

↓
Install VMware
Horizon Client



- **Click on VMware Horizon HTML Access.**

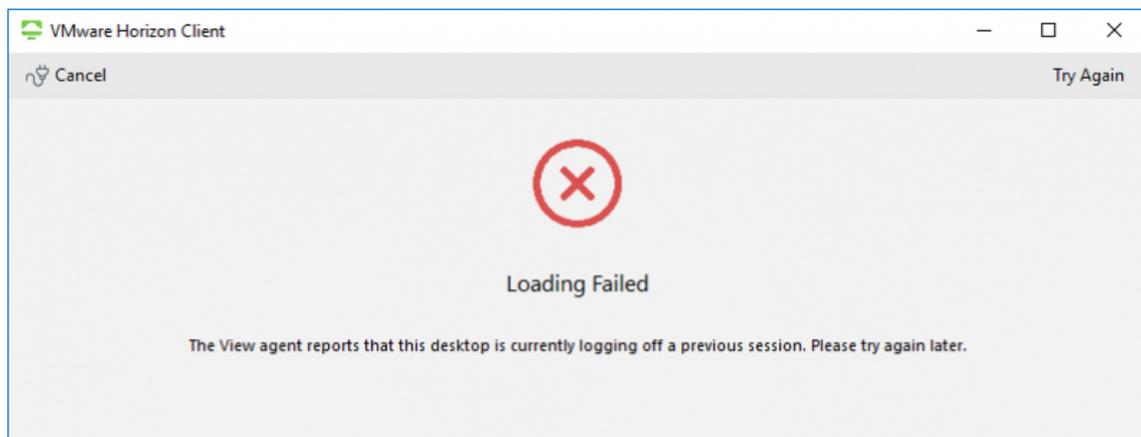


- **Do not change** any settings or parameters in HTML5. Leave everything by default.
- **Just Click** on your Pool.

Session Logon / Logoff

*N.B: Please be **patient** when your desktop loads, or when you logoff / logon to another session.*

- When your desktop appears on-screen, some processes may take additional time to finish loading, thus impacting performance during a few seconds.
- When you logoff your session, please wait at least 30 seconds before logging again to any pool, otherwise your connection might be refused (see screenshot below).



Incident Management

- In case of any other problem with your VDI, please contact **1234** for further assistance.