Parallels

Parallels Desktop Gives Mac Computers a New Lease on Life

"Compared to competing products, Parallels Desktop is user friendly, integrates into OS X in a better way, and is easier to configure."

Jakob Tewes
Head of the Technical Infrastructure Department MaibornWolff

The Results

CHOOSE-YOUR-OWN-DEVICE (CYOD) INITIATIVES
Users enjoy tremendous flexibility with respect to the usage and software configuration of their Mac devices.
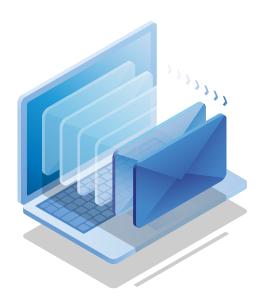
IMPROVED USER EXPERIENCE
It's simple to employ Windows and macOS windows concurrently on the same desktop.

EASE OF USE AND STREAMLINED MANAGEMENT
Users are provided with systems that are easy to operate, run reliably, and need little support.

The Challenge

Jakob Tewes is an employee of MaibornWolff, as Head of the Technical Infrastructure department, he is, in his own words, responsible for "everything that has a plug." Apart from servers and client systems, this also includes for company and privately owned electric cars as well as a range of smart devices connected to the corporate network via an IoT gateway.

When the IT administrator joined MaibornWolff in 2011, he encountered many unhappy users and the source for this discontent: the decision of his predecessor to discontinue support for MacBook computers. This was due to the belief that MacBook—largely used to run Microsoft Office applications—could not be administrated in a professional way. The affected Apple aficionados were allowed to keep their MacBook computers, but going forward, only Windows notebooks with Office 2010 would be permitted. Jakob undertook the mission to address this concern.

The Solution

Beyond the strong emotional bond that users had for the manufacturer's products, there were several rational reasons for reactivating the MacBook computers. They are robust, well-built, offer a remarkably long battery life, and can be migrated rapidly and easily once they've reached the end of their leasing period and the time for tech refresh has come. That said, Jakob was somewhat less thrilled with the prospect of deploying Microsoft Office for Mac on the Apple systems and then reapproving them. The macOS version's limitations were overly restrictive for everyday use, and he wasn't keen on just imposing it on users.

His ideal scenario was to have reactivated MacBook computers featuring the Windows version of MS Office 2010 as the sole supported application software, therefore avoiding additional support burden. This led to a number of different alternatives. Jakob could go with the Apple software, Boot Camp, and configure the computers as dualboot systems; he could use some kind of freeware; or he could consider one of the available virtualizing solutions that enable operating system swaps without restarting the system.

The Boot Camp option was soon put to rest; this solution is known to be high-maintenance and the reboot needed for each OS swap is not very practical. This left various professional virtualization solutions for Mac as options, which Jakob took under scrutiny. According to him, there were several reasons for choosing Parallels® Desktop for Mac: "Compared with competing products, Parallels Desktop is user friendly, integrates into OS X in a better way, and is easier to configure. Furthermore, its Coherence mode—showing Windows and macOS windows concurrently on the same desktop—appealed to us." The temporarily decommissioned MacBook computers were furnished with Parallels® Desktop for Mac Business Edition and Office 2010 licenses and recommissioned for productive use.

The Results

Naturally, Jakob's decision earned him a good first impression with Mac fans at MaibornWolff, but that wasn't his first concern. "It was of course quite pleasant to be able to remove the resentment generated by the prior unpopular decision. However, it is more important in the long run that Parallels Desktop has met all the expectations regarding stability, speed, day-to-day usability, and easy maintainability."

Jakob insists that employees at MaibornWolff have as much freedom of choice as possible in terms of usage and software configuration of their devices. That is part of the corporate culture as he sees it. "We, the people in charge of IT, want to provide our users with systems that are easy to operate, run reliably, and need little support, and that don't turn out to be productivity bottlenecks. Outfitting MacBook computers with Parallels Desktop Business Edition gives us productivity platforms of just that kind." Around 60% of MaibornWolff's workforce use MacBook computers today, and the Parallels Windows virtual machine running on them supports Office 365. They show no differences in performance compared to the company's Windows laptop computers. "I scarcely need to mention that our dedicated Apple users seem clearly more relaxed as they spend their day in the office," Jakob adds with a smile.