

Parallels® Server for Mac

Customer Success Story

Overview

Auto Warehousing Company (AWC) has been fine tuning the lion's share of America's new cars since it was founded in 1962. Each year, 5.5 million new cars arrive at one of AWC's sites where custom accessories such as sunroofs, turbo chargers, alarm systems and other manufacturer items are installed placing the finishing touches on a driver's dream car.

AWC moves a staggering amount of data every year averaging half a million transactions per location with 23 sites in the US and Canada. In the summer of 2007, AWC calculated that to upgrade the company's existing servers and desktops would require a \$1.8M outlay that would not add any new functionality or provide ROI. In an effort to reduce costs, increase system reliability, security and provide expanded IT support services, AWC made the decision to port a major portion of its IT infrastructure to Apple.

Parallels Desktop for Mac was a critical element to this implementation allowing Mac OS X and Windows to operate side by side and share data in an integrated environment. As a result, Windows support calls dropped 62% and the Parallels desktop software runs their applications better than the previous operating system.

AWC has continued with their consolidation program targeting their server environment. Apple's XServe platform was chosen to replace existing servers because of the "green" footprint of the hardware. Leveraging off their success with desktops, Parallels Server for Mac was the natural solution.

Configuration

AWC consolidated Windows Server 2003 servers in their production environment to a single Apple XServe, with 32 gigabytes of memory and eight processors running six virtual servers. Parallels Servers for Mac completes the configuration. "Parallels Server for Mac was unproven at the time we got it, VMWare had virtual server applications for a while, but we put a stake in the ground with Parallels and I don't regret it," says Mike Collision, Director of IS Operations.

Each of the six virtual servers, on a single physical server, is running different environments:

XWin01:	Web Services & homegrown application running on a desktop & iPhone Windows Server 2003 2 Gbytes memory, 16 Mb Video, 64 Gb HDD
XWin02:	SQL Server Windows Server 2003 4 Gbytes memory, 16 Mb Video, 64 Gb HDD
XWin03:	Communications with customer Honda Windows Server 2003 1 Gbyte memory, 16 Mb Video, 64 Gb HDD
XWin04:	Communications with customer Honda Windows Server 2003 1 Gbyte memory, 16 Mb Video, 64 Gb HDD
XWin05:	Customer GM Windows Server 2003 512 Mbytes memory, 16 Mb Video, 64 Gb HDD
XWin06:	Customer GM Windows Server 2003 512 Mbytes memory, 16 Mb Video, 64 Gb HDD



Fast Facts:

- **Company:** Auto Warehousing Company
- **Industry:** Largest full service auto processing company in North America, with 23 sites in US and Canada
- **Headquarters:** Tacoma, WA
- **Volume:** 5.5 million cars per year
- **Key Customers:** Hyundai, Kia, Mazda, Ford, Isuzu, Honda, Mitsubishi, GM, DaimlerChrysler

"Have had no crashes or errors of any kind for the past six months under loads without reboot – it is all good."

– Dale Frantz,
CIO

The technical team at AWC admits that they tried to break Parallels Servers for Mac when they first implemented the software. “We tried real hard with two virtual servers and it really never flinched,” says Collision. “Virtual server #3 has only 1 Gbyte of memory allocated and it is almost instantaneous from log-in to ready to go.”

AWC believes the recipe for acceptance of the virtual server environment has been transparency. “From the client perspective, they notice no difference at all”, says Collision. “They log into the environment just like a physical server.” An additional benefit has been the lack of changes needed for customer applications. “We were concerned that we would have to make a lot of application call changes – it was absolutely seamless.”

Transparency has been key for the administrators as well. They do not care where the hardware is located or that the server is running on an Apple XServe. “All they see when they remote into the machine is the screen they are familiar with. They frankly don’t care where it is located as long as it keeps running and is stable,” says Collision.

Results

AWC is planning on continuing to increase the number of virtual machines. Prior to virtualization, AWC would have had to buy new hardware to support a new customer/configuration with at least a two week lead time. With Parallels, they can meet customer demands within 1 hour – “it is amazing how fast we can get this done,” says Collision.

AWC has seen a 30% ROI for their efforts from power usage, equipment maintenance, human maintenance, air conditioning as well as lots of intangibles. “If you are careful about how you stage the virtual images, very seldom is the server under 80% utilization,” says Collision. “The template tool has saved us tons of time when it came to standing up a server for back-end processes. The time and thought processes were time well spent. Basically, the template tool is amazing.”

In summary, AWC has had no crashes or errors of any kind for the past six months under heavy loads without the need for reboot. “It’s all good,” says Collision. “Parallels was very simple to set-up and establish a Windows XP and Windows Server 2003 environment – it was simplicity itself. Basically two steps: install and call the administrator. Flawless.”