

Central Washington University

"Parallels virtualization software allows me to teach three different operating system environments simultaneously. Thanks to Parallels, our iMacs can host Windows and Linux clients and servers, as well as native OS X client and server operating systems."

- Dr. David Rawlinson, Assistant Professor of Information Technology

Country
United States

Industry
Education

Customer Profile

Central Washington University is a comprehensive, accredited, four-year university located in Washington State. CWU offers 29 graduate programs and 137 undergraduate programs, which range from Education and Business to Social Sciences and Fine Arts.

To prepare its students for today's technologically diverse industries, CWU needed to provide them with the most inclusive lab environments possible. The university needed a flexible, cost-effective solution that fit both its labs and its budget, while still addressing the needs of a rapidly growing, diverse student population.

Company URL
www.cwu.edu

Situation

Central Washington University is a prominent, comprehensive, accredited, four-year university, which currently enrolls more than 10,000 undergraduates and 400 graduates on its 380-acre campus. In addition to its central location in Ellensburg, Washington, CWU also has six additional campuses throughout Washington State. Founded in 1891, CWU has a longstanding history of academic excellence and continues to be one of the nation's fastest-growing universities.

To continue its tradition of excellence, the CWU IT Services Department sought to empower students with access to as many of today's most popular operating systems as possible, including Mac OS X, multiple versions of Windows, and several widely used Linux distributions. However, because the university's labs were stocked primarily with PCs, students were limited to only a few versions of Windows and Linux and were unable to gain critical hands-on experience with Mac OS X-powered server and desktop technology.

Finding a viable solution to the problem was not going to be easy, as CWU faced several growth-based challenges. For example, increased yearly enrollment put a tremendous strain on the university's limited number of computer labs. Additionally, because thousands of students were pursuing a wide variety of degrees, there was a substantial demand for degree-specific technical requirements. To address these concerns, IT Services desperately needed a flexible, easy-to-deploy solution that could be configured 'on the fly' to suit each lab environment's needs, without draining the department's limited resources.

CWU's traditional solution of dedicating each machine to a single, specific operating system at first suggested that purchasing additional hardware to host the required systems and server configurations was the only viable solution. However, this was simply not feasible, as budget and lab space were both limited, and the inefficiency of the 'one OS for one machine' model was resource and time prohibitive.

Solution

IT Services began by replacing the ITAM networking lab PCs with Intel-powered Macs to give students the opportunity to study and work with OS X. Using Parallels Desktop for Mac, IT Services then installed multiple operating systems on each machine, which gave students access to a full range of operating systems and technologies, without crowding the university's educational labs with additional hardware.

With each computer running multiple operating systems in a secure, easily refreshable virtual machine, IT Services was able to customize the lab environment to suit the students' vastly diverse technological needs, without purchasing additional computers.

Parallels Desktop for Mac had answered the call for a flexible, scalable solution to fully address the increasing demand on CWU's educational labs. "Without Apple iMacs and Parallels, we would be limited to Windows and Linux only," declared Dr. David Rawlinson.

Benefits

By installing Parallels Desktop for Mac on its new iMacs, IT Services enabled students to work with server-client or server-server environments using a single piece of hardware. With the ability to simultaneously run OS X, Windows, and Linux on a single hardware platform, students can now benefit from hands-on experience with their OS of choice. Parallels Desktop for Mac enabled instructors to configure multiple virtual machines with the settings and software specific to their educational courses. From a single machine, teachers can now efficiently and effectively provide their students with the best education possible.

Thanks to Parallels Desktop for Mac, students now have access to the operating systems and software packages necessary to prepare for today's mixed-OS IT environments. Graduates will now enter the world better prepared to succeed, continuing Central Washington University's tradition of academic excellence.