



KY Dataseam Grid Computing Initiative

Country
United States

Industry
IT – Grid Computing

Customer Profile
A nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing research and promoting education to support economic growth throughout the Commonwealth.

Company URL
www.kydataseam.com

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- Brian Gupton, Executive Director Kentucky Dataseam.

Situation

Kentucky Dataseam deploys more than 6,000 Macintosh computers across the Kentucky State School System as part of one of the world’s largest managed grid computing systems. In the grid system, unused computing power from each Mac is pooled together and allocated to critical cancer research projects, which dramatically cuts research times, sometimes by as much as 1000x. The grid is set up in such a way that during ‘peak’ hours, students work with their computers as normal, with grid projects running silently in the background using only a small percentage of resources. During non-school hours, projects are moved to the foreground where they can use 100% of the machine’s resources, thus ensuring that computers are constantly in use during hours in which they would normally sit idle.

Kentucky Dataseam ran into a challenge, however, when they realized that teachers and students wanted and needed to work with certain Windows-only programs, specifically those from the Microsoft Office suite of applications. KY Dataseam couldn’t deploy PCs to each school because the grid relied on Macs powered by OS X to operate. Every lost Mac dealt a blow to critical cancer research projects. The Initiative needed a way to provide educators and students access to Windows, without eliminating a single OS X-powered machine.

Solution

Kentucky Dataseam turned to Parallels Desktop for Mac to solve this dilemma. Because Parallels Desktop for Mac enables user to run Windows at the same time as OS X on a single Mac, without rebooting, students were able to learn and experiment with Microsoft Office, while still having access to the great stability, functionality, security, and usability of OS X. Additionally, Kentucky Dataseam was able to keep its research initiative intact, because it did not have to take a single Mac offline.

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Benefits

By deploying Macs + Parallels to schools statewide, Kentucky Dataseam created the ultimate win/win/win situation. Each new Mac deployed to a school as part of the grid is powered by Parallels Desktop for Mac, so from Day One, each Apple computer is a Mac, a PC, and an important part of the Initiative’s cancer research projects. This ensures that students and teachers have the resources they need to teach and learn effectively, IT budgets aren’t crushed by having each workstation outfitted with two computers, and the grid’s cancer research initiatives are able to move at a pace that facilitates world-class research at world-record speeds.