

Orchard Hill College Chooses Parallels RAS to Save on IT Costs



The Customer: Orchard Hill College

London-based [Orchard Hill College](#), is part of Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust, which delivers a range of specialist programs for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. As an outstanding provider and Academy sponsor, Orchard Hill College has a strong track record for making a positive impact within the local community it serves.

Around 300 lecturers and staff work at Orchard Hill College. They need to be able to connect to their desktop with all applications from anywhere and on any device. That's why Andy Barnes, head of IT services, and his team were looking for the ideal solution to support their needs.

The Challenge: Complicated, costly upgrades for remote application components

Previously, Orchard Hill College had implemented remote access through Barracuda SSL VPN. However, the London-based college encountered challenges when providing remote access to its employees due to problems with Java installation and updates.

While the college explored Citrix-based virtualization options, the basic Citrix package only allowed applications to be published through XenApp. To publish applications or virtual and remote desktops to remote machines, Orchard Hill College would have needed to purchase a more expensive license. The need to add additional servers manually in Citrix XenApp would have also required more employee time to set up and maintain. This increased workload along with costly upgrades encouraged Orchard Hill College to search for a better application environment that would facilitate simple and fast implementation across a variety of devices. Ideally, this application and desktop delivery solution would help them to focus on their mission to improve opportunities and outcomes for their pupils and students.

The Solution: Parallels RAS offers an all-in-one virtualization solution

Orchard Hill College assessed virtual applications and remote desktop alternatives before choosing Parallels® Remote Application Server (RAS) for an efficient and cost-effective solution.

By choosing Parallels RAS, the college saved staff time and the IT department's budget by eliminating the need for expensive add-ons and outside technical consultation. Parallels RAS is an all-in-one agent that includes simple patching and updates to all clones, load balancing, automatic configuration of clients, and ready-to-go shadowing features that make technical support easy for administrators as well as end users.

As another benefit, Parallels RAS allowed staff to achieve remote access to Capita SIMS information management software

on remote desktop devices. The institution was able to implement a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policy for the staff; they could update administrative documentation on any device, anywhere, including from the comfort of their own homes. In the future, they will also implement low-cost Google Chromebook™ devices for staff which create further time- and cost-savings for Orchard Hill College.

Parallels RAS is a full-blown virtual desktop and application delivery solution, which offers an outstanding experience for virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), remote desktop, and application virtualization. The out-of-the-box technical features—combined with cost savings on licenses and third-party support—made Parallels RAS a clearly superior choice for Orchard Hill College.

The Benefits: Simple, effective upgrade lowered the IT spend

Upgrading to Parallels RAS was a quick and straightforward process. The Orchard Hill College IT department was impressed to see the speed its end users were able to migrate to the Parallels RAS platform. After concerns that the move could take months, they were pleased to see that it was achieved in the course of a few hours.

Orchard Hill College appreciated the ability to choose your own device. They currently support Windows, Mac®, iOS, and HTML5 Client, and are planning to add support for Chromebooks in the near future. Allowing users to bring their own devices will extend the life of the college's current hardware while saving money in future investments.

After implementing Parallels RAS, Orchard Hill College was able to lower the total-cost-of-ownership (TCO) of their remote application management. Decreases in licensing costs, reduced additional application costs, an increase in efficiency to load balances, and server management optimization added up to noticeable savings for the college.



“We also looked at Citrix, but it was a lot more expensive and trickier.”

–Andy Barnes
Head of IT Services

Conclusion

The Parallels RAS comprehensive desktop delivery solution provided Orchard Hill College with a seamless, easy-to-use ERP application publishing environment for its customers. The most significant advantage for the organization was that Parallels RAS fully supports ERP software on a wide range of devices. In the end, Parallels RAS fulfilled and exceeded the entire range of expectations the Obers team had set for its application publishing solution.

About Parallels

Parallels is a global leader in virtual desktop, application delivery, and mobile device management solutions. Thousands of organizations worldwide trust in the reliability and scalability of Parallels VDI and virtualization solutions. Parallels makes it simple and affordable to deliver applications to any device over the cloud, or through on-premise and hybrid deployments.

The company's solution portfolio includes the award-winning Parallels Remote Application Server (RAS), providing platform-independent virtual desktop, application delivery, and integrated thin-client management from a unified interface to any modern operating system.