



Switch to Parallels Remote Application Server and Save 60% Compared to Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops

White Paper | Parallels Remote Application Server

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Introduction

Many business software implementation projects are stalled or scrapped completely because the licensing and pricing model catches clients by surprise. Product licensing should be straightforward and easy to understand, avoiding multiple editions and licensing modes that can be confusing. Complex pricing and licensing can lead customers to purchase a cheaper version that doesn't meet their needs, or to invest in an overly complex version that results in a poor return on investment (ROI).

Citrix vs. Parallels RAS: A Closer Look

Although Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops is one of the best-known solutions in the application and desktop delivery space, it has its challenges—coupled with an expensive price tag. If your bottom line is hurting, it might be worth looking at an alternative. In this white paper, we'll explore how migrating to Parallels Remote Application Server (RAS) can reduce the cost of application and virtual desktop delivery solutions by about 60% in certain scenarios.

We'll also explain why choosing Parallels RAS helps enterprises to build a fully scalable, centrally managed, secure and high-availability application and virtual desktop solution for on-premises, hybrid and cloud scenarios.

Product Editions & Deployment Types

The Citrix range of products is complex. To begin, you need to select a product: Citrix Virtual Apps if you are planning to only virtualize applications, Virtual Desktops if you intend to build a Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) solution or Virtual Apps and Desktops if you require a complete virtualization solution.

Then, you must choose a product edition: Standard, Advanced or Premium. Since not all features included within each edition are frequently used, you'll have to review complex feature matrixes to decide which one best fits your requirements to ensure you don't overpay. For example, [here](#) is the Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops feature matrix, which specifies the on-premises workloads that are included with each product version.

In terms of cloud deployments, organizations must decide whether to use one of three options. There's Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops Standard service for Azure, Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops premium service or Citrix Workspace Premium Plus, which is a suite of different services available in four editions: Essentials, Standard, Premium and Premium Plus. To include full support for on-premises or hybrid Virtual Apps and Desktops workloads, the most expensive edition is required.

Parallels RAS, on the other hand, is a one-stop solution: There's just one product edition for on-premises, hybrid and cloud setups. This single edition includes all enterprise-level features, such as application and virtual desktop delivery, load balancing, reporting, user-session monitoring, high-availability tools and more. There's no need to evaluate multiple editions to determine which best suits your business needs. And since Parallels RAS is deployed via on-premises, hybrid and cloud environments, you're always in control of managing the entire infrastructure.

License Pricing

Citrix license pricing is as complex as its solution suite because there are different subscription models for on-premises and cloud services. In addition, the monthly average price per user depends on the total number of licenses acquired. In October 2020, Citrix ended the availability of its perpetual licenses for Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops on-premises solutions in favor of a new subscription model already offered for its cloud services.

Each Virtual Apps and Desktops license unit price* is shown in the following table (note that this is for a subscription license):

Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops	On-premises	Standard service for Azure	Premium service	Workspace Premium Plus
1-year subscription	Not public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$10 term commitment • \$16 pay as you go monthly subscription 	\$19 per user per month	\$32 per user per month
3-year subscription	Not public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$8 term commitment • \$16 pay as you go monthly subscription 	\$15 per user per month	\$25 per user per month

On-premises: Deployed as an on-premises solution to centralize management in your data center

Standard service for Azure: Cloud-based management and virtual app and desktop delivery

Premium Service: Deployed as a cloud service to deliver applications and desktops

Workspace Premium Plus: Digital workspace solution that integrates business resources

*MSRP monthly average per user for 500 users

Parallels understands that businesses invest in virtualization to reduce overhead costs and simplify matters. The **full-featured edition of Parallels RAS is available for \$99.99 per concurrent user (1-year subscription)**, \$189.99 per concurrent user (2-year subscription) and \$269.99 per concurrent user (3-year subscription). The Parallels RAS Service Provider License Agreement (SPLA) model is licensed per peak number of concurrent users over a billing period, which allows companies to operate via a pay-as-you-go licensing model.

Hidden Costs

Hidden costs due to certain features not being part of the base package can be a big issue—one that companies might not realize the impact of right away. For example, Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops doesn't include any load balancing functionality to distribute incoming connections among front-end servers. Citrix recommends the use of the Citrix ADC (formerly Netscaler) virtual or physical appliance, which is an additional component for SSL offloading tasks and front-end load balancing. Citrix ADC appliances are offered as an optional feature, which means additional costs.

When you purchase a Parallels RAS license, it comes with all available features. It's also simple to install, navigate and manage, unlike other products that require different administration consoles, which can hinder management tasks. For example, Parallels RAS includes the preconfigured High Availability Load Balancing (HALB) virtual appliance to distribute load among the Secure Client Gateways. This means you can build a high-availability IT infrastructure with load balancers, SSL off-loaders and multiple sites over different physical locations without having to pay for additional software licenses.

Use Case: Approximately 60% Savings with Parallels RAS

As of the date of this white paper (January 2021), Citrix has not yet published its prices for on-premises setups. So, for this use case, we'll use a Virtual Apps and Desktop scenario deployed over Citrix Cloud, assuming that we're comparing a traditional infrastructure setup with a cloud service. However, the Citrix Cloud service requires the customer's IT department to handle the deployment and management of different components, including Cloud Connectors, thus being very similar to an on-premises installation in terms of installation and administration tasks.

The comparison table shown below demonstrates how companies can save from nearly 51% (3-year subscription) to more than 56% (1-year subscription) when choosing Parallels RAS over Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops Premium Cloud Service as their application and desktop delivery solution for 500 concurrent users.

500 Concurrent Users	Parallels RAS	Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops (Premium Service)	Savings (product licenses)
1-year subscription	\$49,995	\$114,780	56.44%
3-year subscription	\$134,995	\$275,400	50.98%

** Citrix prices sourced from <https://www.citrix.com/products/citrix-virtual-apps-and-desktops/>
 Estimated monthly cost for Virtual Apps and Desktops Premium service

1-year contract: \$19.13 per user, per month * 500 users * 12 months = \$114,780
 3-year contract: \$15.30 per user, per month * 500 users * 12 months * 3 years = \$275,400

This 500-user setup is intended to be a load-balanced and high-availability solution. Although third-party load balancers can also be used, Citrix recommends deploying Citrix ADC, its application delivery and load balancing solution, to load balance incoming user connections.

Due to high-availability reasons, deploying a pair of Citrix ADCs is recommended to guarantee business continuity if one of them fails. Unlike Parallels RAS HALBs, which are included with a Parallels RAS license, Citrix ADCs must be acquired separately, thus further increasing costs.

Looking for More Reasons to Switch to Parallels RAS?

The economic factor is certainly key when thinking about a product change, but it's not the only one. Below are several additional benefits of switching to Parallels RAS.

Straightforward Installation

Parallels RAS helps enterprises deploy an application and desktop delivery solution in a very simple manner due to its easy, wizard-driven installation process. A complete Parallels RAS setup to run different virtual workloads and that includes reporting and monitoring can be installed and configured in no more than a few hours. In addition to the traditional desktop console, where all management tasks are unified, Parallels RAS includes a modern and web-based Management Portal, which enables administrators to perform common tasks such as session management, application publishing and infrastructure component deployment and configuration.

Unlike Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops, which does not support cloud-hosted workloads for on-premises deployments running Current Release (CR) versions, Parallels RAS supports running workloads over both public cloud providers and on-premises infrastructure, thus providing organizations with the flexibility to build the setup that best fits their needs.

In addition, Parallels RAS includes built-in automated optimization capabilities for RD Session Hosts, VDI and Windows Virtual Desktop workloads. Depending on the server type and the use case, administrators can apply more than 130 pre-defined settings, including custom and third-party script execution, which saves time while providing an efficient application and desktop delivery.

Unified WVD Integration

Thanks to the ability to centrally install any type of server agent right from the management console and the simplicity of a Parallels RAS enhances the capabilities of Windows Virtual Desktop by integrating all workloads and resources within the Parallels RAS Console. Organizations can provide end-users with a single-entry point to published resources running over hybrid and multi-cloud environments, including access to Windows 10 Enterprise multi-session hosts. Parallels RAS also provides organizations with the capability to centralize certain administration tasks, such as dynamic workload management and user-session monitoring, regardless of where the application or desktop that they're running is hosted.

FSLogix Integration

Microsoft FSLogix Profile Containers are used to persist user configuration and data when working over non-persistent environments. This profile management solution considerably speeds up logon and application launch time and supports the industry standard Server Message Block (SMB) protocol and Cloud Cache for resiliency and availability. The deployment of the FSLogix agent and all the configuration settings for RD Session Hosts, VDI and Windows Virtual Desktop workloads are integrated within the Parallels RAS Console.

User-Session Monitoring

Parallels RAS includes built-in user-session monitoring metrics to help organizations enhance service delivery and ensure an optimal user experience. The UX evaluator, which calculates the time elapsed between user interaction and the response of a published resource, as well as other important metrics, such as logon duration breakdown and network latency, provides administrators a complete overview of the user session. This information is especially helpful when analyzing incidents reported by end-users or even to proactively identify issues that may impact the user experience.

Auto-Scaling And Automation

Parallels RAS auto-scaling and auto-provisioning features automatically increase or decrease the number of hosts running a workload based on demand, thus optimizing resource usage and reducing costs and complexity. Parallels RAS includes the capability of scaling up and down those infrastructures running over both Azure and on-premises hypervisors.

Parallels RAS PowerShell SDK and Parallels RAS REST API include a complete set of commands and methods to help organizations to automate different administration tasks, such as the activation of a new VDI provider, the creation of published desktops based on a template and the management of user sessions.

Conclusion

Switching from one application and desktop delivery solution to another requires diligent research, planning and execution. A key part of this exercise is to analyze and understand your business needs so you can choose the right solution without overpaying for unnecessary functionality. Choosing Parallels RAS over Citrix Virtual Apps and Desktops Premium Cloud Service can reduce the amount you pay by about 60%, enabling you to invest that money in other areas of your business.

In addition to being cost-effective, Parallels RAS is a full-featured and scalable application and desktop delivery solution that optimizes the user experience and eases administration by unifying all management tasks in the Parallels RAS Console.

Ready to try Parallels RAS for yourself? [Download a free 30-day trial today to test out a fully functional Parallels RAS setup](#) that may be deployed over your on-premises infrastructure, Amazon Web Services or Microsoft Azure.

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