Parallels®

Orchestr8 Chooses Parallels RAS to Replace Citrix

> "Parallels Remote Application Server has been the most reliable component within the whole system. It has never failed to do its job. The main driving factor was the cost of licensing, with Parallels Remote Application Server being considerably cheaper for concurrent users than Citrix."
>
> Stuart Watton
> *Systems Manager Orchestr8*

The Results

LOWERED THE TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP
Parallels® Remote Application Server (RAS) is considerably cheaper for concurrent users compared to Citrix.

EASE OF USE AND STREAMLINED MANAGEMENT
Features like built-in load balancing and the ability to instantly reconnect to dropped sessions were not available with the previous solution.

INCREASED REMOTE ACCESSIBILITY
Application publishing is quick and easy, enabling reliable access from any device, anywhere.

The Challenge

Orchestr8 developed a custom browser based on the IE11 rendering engine that only allows users to access one site and inject JavaScript into any page to take a server-side screenshot. Along with this personalized application, the company required other applications and desktops to be published to remote users. Orchestr8 previously used Citrix Presentation Server 4.5. The application delivery infrastructure included 2 HP DL360 servers, 2 Citrix Presentation Server licenses with corresponding Windows server 2003 licenses and remote desktop CALS.

The initial network was configured on 32-bit windows. However, the company found that they either needed to add other servers or move to 64-bit servers. Additionally, Citrix Presentation Server 4.5 was complex to set up on 64-bit servers, and a Citrix consultant was required to perform the setup.

Nonetheless, the Citrix technical support team was sometimes swift to answer; while on other occasions, for example, when issues were more complex and required a request for development status updates on the RFD, it was nonexistent. There were also inconsistencies between different clients.

For instance, the Mac Client allows you to connect to the same gateway with multiple usernames while the Windows Client does not; the Mac Client lets you edit connection properties if the user is attached to a policy while the Windows client does not. In addition to these challenges, Orchestr8 was advised to reduce bandwidth to its clients. Furthermore, the licensing costs for Citrix solutions were higher. Consequently, the company started looking for a cost-effective alternative.

The Solution

Orchestr8 chose Parallels RAS because it perfectly addressed its requirements. It was easy to deploy and manage while being cost-effective at the same time. Windows Remote Desktop Services (RDS) was configured with enhanced functionality. The company leverages the Parallels RAS Console for server load balancing and straightforward application publishing.

Nonetheless, the initial challenge was understanding how all the components of Parallels RAS connect, what parts needed to be where within the firewall (DMZ, Internal etc.,) and what ports each component needed to communicate with other components within the system. Once this was fully understood, and the firewall configured, the rest of the setup and configuration was simple.

The Results

Orchestr8 has quickly realized that infrastructure maintenance is vastly simplified. Upgrading to a new version is as simple as running a new install on the primary Publishing Agent server and then rolling out the updates to other agents from the Parallels RAS Console. Publishing a new application is a straightforward process with wizard-based guides.

Moreover, Parallels RAS is reliable and rarely fails. Additionally, while working with unreliable Internet connections, Parallels RAS can seamlessly reconnect to dropped sessions, which was not possible with Citrix Presentation Server 4.5.

However, while efficiency improvement is a side benefit, the main driving factor was the cost of licensing, with Parallels RAS being considerably cheaper for concurrent users when compared with Citrix. Orchest8 also finds the built-in load balancer particularly useful as it is simple to reconfigure its requirements at any time.

Furthermore, Orchestr8 is likely to see a significant expansion over the next few years and cannot imagine the business being able to scale up without the reliability, simplicity and ease of Parallels RAS, especially on the client side.