Product Brief: Parallels Desktop 11 & Parallels Access

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What is it?

Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac is a virtualization software that integrates the latest Windows operating systems, such as Windows 10, with the latest Mac operating systems such as OS X El Capitan. Parallels Access 3.0 is a remote access product that makes Macs and PCs available to mobile devices and web clients from anywhere.

Who makes it?

Parallels
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Competitors

Competitors for Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac include VMware Fusion and Oracle Virtualbox. Apple Boot Camp can also be considered a competitor, though it only allows OS switching, not integration. Parallels Access 3.0 has a number of competitors including LogMeInPro, Citrix XenApp, VMware Workstation Pro and Windows Remote Desktop Connection.

Why is it important?

Allows owners of Mac desktops and laptop computers to not just run Windows, but to integrate it with their OS X user experience with Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac, as well as their mobile experience through Parallels Access 3.0 both of which fully support Windows 10 and OS X El Capitan.

Where can I get it?

Copies of Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac and Parallels Access 3.0 can be purchased and downloaded from the main Parallels website: http://www.parallels.com.

When it is available?

Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac & Parallels Access 3.0 is available now.

How much does it cost?

Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac Standard Edition subscription costs $79.99 a year. Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac Pro Edition, designed specifically for developers, testers and power users, costs $99.99 per year. Parallels Access 3.0 costs $19.99 a year with the ability to connect up to five computers from an unlimited number of mobile devices. Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac Business Edition is also available on a subscription basis at $99 a year, including Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM) when paired with Parallels Mac Management for SCCM. A complimentary edition of Parallels Access 3.0 comes with a subscription to Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac Pro.

Where in the world is it available?

Parallels Desktop 11 & Parallels Access are available globally.

Analysis

Parallels has released a pair of outstanding applications that not only allow Apple OS X users to run Windows, but allows them to integrate it completely with their Apple desktop, notebook and mobile devices.

Coherence mode integrates the Windows desktop, including mapping the OS X file system. Windows applications run very much like native OS X apps. This background integration includes the ability to call on Microsoft digital assistant, Cortana, even when it isn't the forefront app.

Although there is a virtual disk created to hold and manage files required by Windows, the entirety of the Mac file system is mapped directly into Windows in the Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac Pro Edition. There is no need to reinstall Dropbox, OneDrive or any other cloud-based storage solution into the Windows environment. Parallels also uses the native Mac printer drivers.

Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac shares data between environments, including location, which is passed on to Cortana. It also supports Linux implementations. Enterprise level customers gain volume license management.

The Standard Edition emulates up to 8GB of RAM and 4 CPUs while the Pro and Business Editions will emulate up to 64GB of RAM and 16 CPUs. Keep in mind that this is an emulator. The better the Mac CPU and amount of available memory, the better the performance. Developers, testers and power users need a large amount of memory and processing power to properly run the applications they work with. A large percentage of

Parallels user base are developers, and the company determined these features were not needed in the Standard Edition. However, current Standard Edition users have a one-time option to upgrade to the Pro Edition at a reduced price.

I have used Parallels 9 for the Mac and Parallels Desktop 10 for Mac before the latest release. Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac, and the powerful coherence feature, is much more highly integrated than previous versions, and offers improved performance as well. Macbook users can even flip-on a travel mode which turns off power hungry features when forced to tap into their battery for long periods of time.
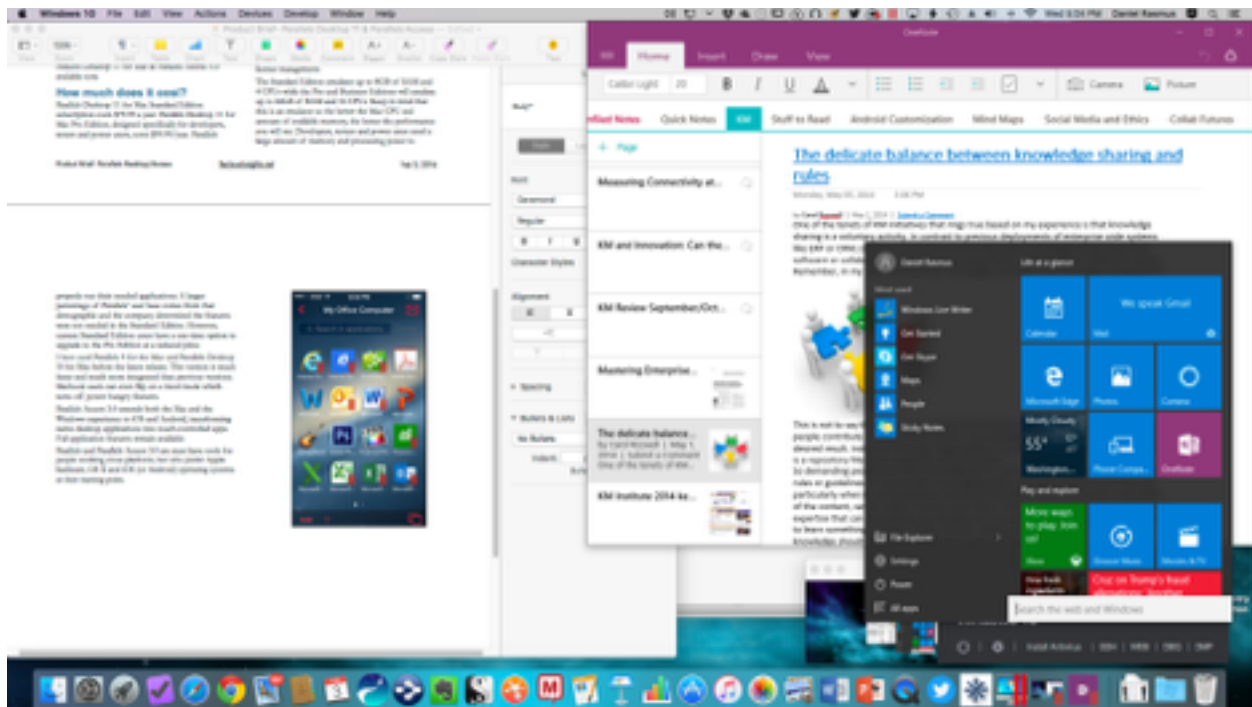
Parallels Access 3.0 extends both the Mac and the Windows experience to iOS and Android, transforming native desktop applications into touch-controlled apps. Full application features remain available. The cost is reasonable even for those who run one specific Windows application, like QuickBooks — or who are testing apps and interfaces for enterprises.

Start-up speed, while better than previous versions, still takes some time, but once the apps are running, they remain snappy, unless affected by background applications like Windows Update or OS X Time Machine.

Parallels and Parallels Access 3.0 are must have tools for people working cross-platform, but who prefer Apple hardware, OS X and iOS (or Android) operating systems as their starting point.

An example of Parallels Access 3.0 running on an iPhone with access to native Windows apps through icons. Once the apps launch, they can be controlled via typical iOS touches and taps.

Parallels Desktop 11 for Mac running in coherence mode. Microsoft OneNote is running "outside" of Windows, and the Windows 10 start menu is available from the Parallels icon.