

Run Windows and Linux

By Stan Horwitz

Product: Parallels Desktop 5 for Macintosh

Company: Parallels

URL: <http://www.Parallels.com>

List Price: \$65.00 (depending on where you buy it). A lower cost upgrade version is also available for \$49.99

System Requirements: Intel-based Mac (32-bit or 64-bit), 1GB RAM (at least 2GB best to run Windows Vista or 7) and 450MB disk space. Mac OS X 10.4.11 or later. Note that additional disk space will be needed for your virtual systems

Test system: MacPro with dual 2.66 GHz 32-bit Dual Core Intel Xeon processors, 5GB RAM, dual internal hard drives and Mac OS X 10.6.2

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO NEED TO RUN applications on Microsoft Windows, Linux, or some other non-Apple operating system, Parallels Desktop 5 Macintosh is well worth checking out.

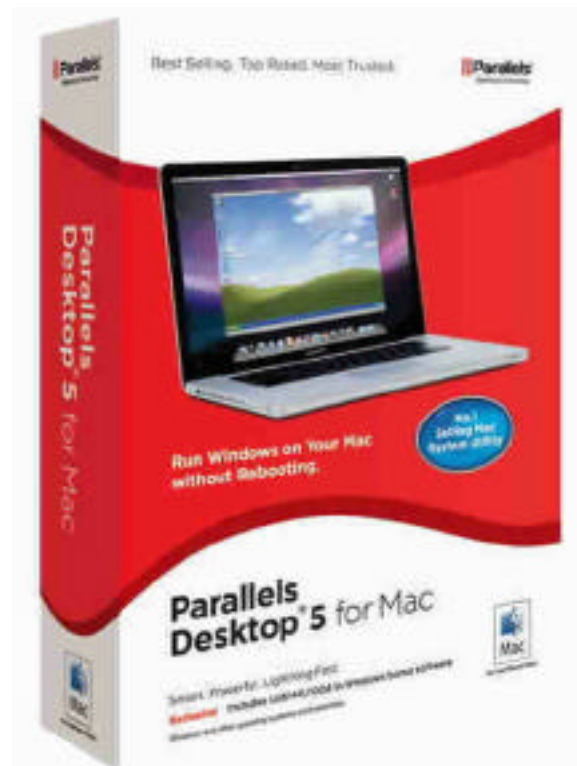
If you check the MLMUG web site's reviews section, you will see reviews for previous versions of this software. [WebEd Note: There are two: Parallels Desktop for Mac and Parallels Desktop 4.0 for Mac]. With that in mind, I will mostly focus on what's new with this version rather than rehash old news.

I have been using Parallels Desktop for Macintosh at work since version 3. When I received a first-generation MacPro at work, I needed Windows functionality for a few applications that are not available on Mac OS X. I first started using Parallels by running Windows XP Pro. After countless crashes and months of frustration, I replaced Windows XP Pro with Windows Vista, which is a truly bloated and annoying OS, but much more reliable than XP Pro. I am now transitioning Windows 7, Microsoft's successor to Windows Vista and a big improvement over Vista. Not surprisingly Windows 7 is far behind Snow Leopard in ease of use.

I upgraded from Parallels Desktop 4 for Macintosh to version 5. After I did the upgrade, I installed Windows 7 Enterprise Edition on my MacPro. I am still using Windows Vista, but I intend to get rid of it soon and use Windows 7 exclusively for those times when Mac OS X can't serve my needs.

The process of upgrading from Parallels 4 to 5 couldn't have been easier. I just downloaded and installed the new version and typed in the license key. No problem at all, except for a minor glitch. Whenever I start Windows Vista, I get a notification message that it needs to be registered again. I ignore that message because the Vista Enterprise Edition I use gets its registration key from a server on the network in my office.

The Windows installer has been optimized and simplified such that Windows Vista or 7 can be installed with only three mouse clicks. I saw this feature in action when I installed Windows 7. I have Windows Vista running on a Boot Camp volume. Since one can only have one Boot Camp partition at a time on a Mac, I had to install Windows 7 entirely as a virtual machine image, not a physical disk image. What I did was I downloaded the Windows 7 ISO file from a server in



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my department, and then I used Parallels to install Windows 7 from that disk image. The installation was flawless and fast.

I have mostly been using Windows Vista since I upgraded to Parallels 5 Desktop for Macintosh, but Windows 7 works fine as far as I can tell. Vista works better than ever too.

Over 70 new features have been included in this version. Most notably Parallels Desktop 5 for Macintosh is faster at running Windows than previous versions. The procedure to install Windows XP, Vista, or 7 is easier now. Parallels 5 for Macintosh is also optimized for Snow Leopard and it can utilize up to 8 virtual CPUs and it handles 64-bit Windows. The Parallels Compressor has been enhanced to reclaim more disk space. You also get Parallels Internet Security by Kaspersky, which is antivirus software. Since my use of Windows is minimal, I have not tried this antivirus software.

Parallels Desktop 5 for Macintosh is also smarter. It recognizes the multi-touch trackpad on portable Macs and allows gestures to be used in Windows applications. USB compatibility has been improved to add compatibility with more devices, such as printers, cameras, mobile phones and GPS devices. Integration with Exposé makes it easier to work with different Exposé windows. USB connectivity is also 20% faster. Several new features have also been added that benefit Linux users. Video performance has also been enhanced. You can lock down your virtual machines to prevent any unauthorized changes from being made to them.

With this software, you can set up the Windows flavor of your choice and then run Windows-based apps out of your Dock just like you can with Mac OS X apps. You don't even need to see the Windows desktop if you don't want to.

I am often asked which Mac virtualization package (Fusion 3 or Parallels Desktop 5 for Macintosh) is better? In the past, I usually chose VMware's Fusion. Not any more. Parallels Desktop 5 for Macintosh is getting better reviews than Fusion 3. I use Fusion 3 at home and I have to agree with those who say this new Parallels is better. As of now, the biggest strength I see for Fusion 3 is in business environments where VMware is used. For the rest of us, Parallels Desktop 5 for Macintosh is a great choice.

I read that the new Parallels Desktop 5 for Macintosh has a lot of new graphics enhancements

that make game playing a great experience. For example, games such as QuakeWars, Quake 4, QuakeLive, SolidWorks 2009 work well in this environment. Previously, the best way to play those games on a Mac was to boot the Mac into Windows via Boot Camp. Now, you can play those games in a virtual machine. Of course, you'll need more RAM to do it.

Parallels Desktop 5 for Macintosh can also be used to run Linux and numerous other operating systems. It is a great tool for software development and it eliminates the need to buy a separate computer for each OS you want to run.

For a list of the new features Parallels Desktop 5 for Mac offers, check out the web page at <http://www.parallels.com/products/desktop/whyswitch/switchfromvmware/>.

Rating 5 out of 5 Apples



Reviewer: Stan Horwitz

Stan Horwitz is a long-time Mac user and computer technologist. Stan uses his Macs for everything from personal taxes, banking, and investment management to interactive messaging, digital photography, music, and keeping in touch with distant friends and family.

Stan works for Temple University's Enterprise Systems Group where he is responsible for planning and implementing disaster recovery procedures, electronic mail list management, research computation, and technology planning for the University.