

## New Zealand's largest web hosting provider grows its operations with Parallels

Web Drive is New Zealand's largest web hosting provider, managing 100,000 domains for over 25,000 customers. Established by five friends in 1997, the two-time Deloitte Fast 50 winner now employs about 50 staff and is New Zealand's only ICANN accredited domain registrar.

In 2006, Web Drive acquired two web hosting companies which were using Parallels Plesk Panel. Since then, the proportion of its customers running on Parallels has more than quadrupled to about one third of Web Drive's total business.

"The Parallels environment is very important to us. Its integration and automation capabilities have helped us a lot over the past few years. We didn't need to develop our own billing systems and infrastructure, and that has made it a lot easier for us to grow," said Robin Dickie, General Manager, Web Drive.

### Business Challenge

Like most web hosting companies, Web Drive devotes a significant proportion of its manpower resources to ongoing tasks such as site migration, optimizing system performance, and ensuring that operating systems and other software are kept up to date. "We run a lot of servers for a lot of sites, keeping current is a constant challenge for our Systems Administration team," said Dickie. Other operational tasks include managing the customer lifecycle, from capturing orders through to service provisioning, billing and payment processing.

### The Solution

To enhance the efficiency of these operations, Web Drive decided to deploy the latest version of Parallels Plesk Panel, a hosting control panel solution that allows server administrators to set up new websites, reseller accounts, email accounts, and DNS entries through a web-based interface. It also provides end user access for mail, domain, reseller and server-level administration.

Enhancements and new features in Parallels Plesk Panel include an updated migration manager, support for multiple PHP versions on a single server and the incorporation of supplementary high performance web server nginx. "We upgraded to Parallels Plesk Panel for performance, improved integration with Parallels Business Automation Standard (PBAS) and the ability to manage site migrations more easily," said Dickie.

### Benefits

The upgrade to the latest version of Parallels Plesk Panel has enabled Web Drive to take advantage of new enhancements to further improve its operations. "Parallels has been a good partner to us," said Dickie. "They provide a solid and well-integrated suite of products that work as advertised and deliver good results."

#### Saves Manpower with Automated Migration

The updated migration manager in Parallels Plesk Panel has made it a lot easier for Web Drive to migrate web sites from one server to another. "Previously, this was a full time role," said Dickie. "With the migration manager, however, it has become a largely automated process and we are able to do it much more quickly. We see this as a significant step forward and we are hoping to free up what was a full-time position doing manual migrations."



### Business Situation Summary

As a web hosting company, Web Drive devotes a significant proportion of its manpower resources to ongoing tasks such as site migration, optimizing system performance, and ensuring that operating systems and other software are kept up to date.

### Solution Summary

To enhance the efficiency of its operations, Web Drive decided to deploy the latest version of hosting control panel solution Parallels Plesk Panel for performance, improved integration with Parallels Business Automation Standard and the ability to manage site migrations more easily.

### Benefits Summary

- Saves manpower with automated migration
- Increases efficiency of system administrators
- Improves hosting performance
- Facilitates customer lifecycle management
- Empowers customers with self-service capabilities
- Opens up new opportunities for value-added services

### Parallels Products Used

- Parallels Plesk Panel
- Parallels Business Automation Standard

The migration manager also helps Web Drive to pre-empt migration-related problems by identifying possible transfer limitations in advance. This allows the service provider to configure new servers with the correct services, disk space and other resources before starting the transfer process.

#### **Increases Efficiency of System Administrators**

The latest version of Parallels Plesk Panel also includes many other features and enhancements which make it easier for Web Drive to maintain its systems and manage its IT environment. For example, by incorporating standard management practices which are widely used by system administrators, less training time is required to bring Web Drive's IT personnel up to speed with the use of the new control panel.

Parallels Plesk Panel also simplifies administrative tasks by allowing multiple versions of PHP on a server. This enables all web sites to be consolidated onto the latest version of the control panel instead of having to maintain a mix of old and new panel versions to support web sites running different PHP versions.

#### **Improves Hosting Performance**

The integration of nginx into Parallels Plesk Panel allows Web Drive to optimize the web hosting performance of its Linux control panel. Customers can enable nginx to serve static files directly without passing the requests to Apache, thus improving website performance, especially for sites with high loads. Similarly, the performance of web apps can be improved by using nginx to process PHP files.

#### **Facilitates Customer Lifecycle Management**

Improved integration between Parallels Plesk Panel and PBAS allows Web Drive to take advantage of the hosting automation solution to manage all stages of the customer lifecycle. For example, PBAS will receive orders from the online storefront, provision services to application servers, obtain licenses from the Parallels Key Administrator server, bill customers for services, collect their payments, and provide them with a web-based control panel that lets them update their services on their own.

#### **Empowers Customers with Self-Service Capabilities**

Web Drive also offers Parallels Plesk Panel to its customers, empowering them with greater management and administrative control over their own web hosting environments. For example, using the control panel, they are able to modify server settings at their convenience and in real time. This, in turn, frees up Web Drive's resources to focus on delivering higher value-added services.

#### **Opens Up New Opportunities for Value-Added Services**

The adoption of Parallels Plesk Panel also paves the way for Web Drive to offer other value-added services such as Parallels Web Presence Builder and the Application Vault. Parallels Web Presence Builder is a site building tool which makes it easy for businesses to create their web sites using a wide range of available templates, and automatically optimizes those sites for mobile devices. Application Vault, an add-on for the control panel, is a customizable repository of applications which allow businesses to easily add or remove applications such as content management systems, forums, counters and chat software.

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— Robin Dickie  
General Manager, Web Drive

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