

## **Headless mode in Parallels Desktop Pro Edition**

- Parallels Desktop for Mac Pro Edition
- Parallels Desktop for Mac Business Edition

## Question

I want to know more about the **Headless mode** in Parallels Desktop Pro Edition.

## Information

Headless mode allows you to run virtual machines as background processes without the graphical user interface (GUI) displayed on the Mac desktop. Parallels Desktop runs as a background process (service) in this mode and is able to start a virtual machine automatically on the Mac startup. With this functionality, you can run multiple virtual machines on a single high-performance Mac providing virtual machine access to your users. The users can connect to their designated virtual machines via RDP, SSH, or other remote tools.

To configure Parallels Desktop to run as a service, do the following:

- 1. Open the virtual machine <u>configuration</u> dialog.
- 2. Click **Options** and then select **Startup and Shutdown**.
- 3. In the **Start Automatically** menu, select **When Mac starts**. This tells the Parallels Desktop service to start the virtual machine automatically when OS X starts.
- 4. In the **Startup delay** field, set the automatic startup delay in seconds. If you have multiple virtual machines with no autostart delay set, they will start concurrently when you start or restart the host computer. By using the autostart delay you can reduce the load on the host during startup. The autostart delay option can also be helpful when one or more virtual machines depend on a service running in another virtual machine. By setting the autostart delay option for virtual machines, you can ensure that the virtual machine providing the service is up and running before the other virtual machines are started. You can also set the startup delay using a command line interface (see below).
- 5. In the **On Mac Shutdown** menu, select **Suspend**. This tells the Parallels Desktop service to suspend the virtual machine when the Mac is shut down or restarted.
- 6. In the **On Windows Close** menu, select **Keep running in background** (or **Ask me what to do** if you want a dialog to be displayed when you close the virtual machine window). This way the virtual machine will not be accidentally shut down or suspended when you open and close its window while Parallels Desktop is running as a service.
- 7. Set the rest of the options according to your usual preferences.

**Note**: please be advised that to use this feature Parallels Desktop should be granted with Full Disk Access in macOS System Preferences: **System Preferences** > **Security & Privacy** > **Privacy** tab > select **Full Disk Access** > make sure Parallels Desktop is added to the list (add it in case it's not added).

You may now close the virtual machine window and the Parallels Desktop application. This will only close the graphical user interface. The Parallels Desktop service and the virtual machines will continue to run in the background.

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