

Tools for managing virtual environments

VIRTUAL ADMIN

This month we examine techniques for deploying and managing virtual systems. **BY JOE CASAD**

Given the rapid pace of IT evolution, virtualization is already yesterday's news. IT managers around the world are working out strategies for how to meet the virtualization challenge. You've tried all the leading tools – Xen, VMware, KVM, VirtualBox – and now you're ready to take the next step. This month we examine some techniques for deploying, configuring, and managing virtual environments.

We start with a study of MLN (Manage Large Networks), a powerful open source virtual machine management tool that lets you “build sophisticated, dynamic virtual infrastructures using freely available virtualization platforms.” We'll show you how to use MLN to deploy and manage Xen, VMware, and User Mode Linux virtual environments.

Next we examine the world of virtual appliances. You'll learn what a virtual appliance is and why more admins are turning to the virtual appliance as a simple, efficient solution for running network services in Linux. We'll also show you two easy tools for creating your own

virtual appliances: VMware Studio and SUSE Studio.

The next article in our virtualization set shows how to set up your own virtual cluster using the Rocks Linux distro. As you'll learn, NASA and other leading scientific institutions use Rocks clusters to perform complex calculations, but Rocks is simple enough even for casual users. And if you're still looking for more information on the art of deploying and managing virtual environments, turn to our Know-How section, where you'll find an article on automated installation with the Cobbler provisioning system.

If you're finished with

the experiments and you want to get on with the real business of deploying virtual systems on a massive scale, you'll find lots of useful information up ahead on virtualization in Linux environments. And even if you're just getting started with your experiments, this issue highlights some handy apps you might want to integrate into your toolkit. We hope you enjoy this month's Virtual Admin cover story. ■

**COVER STORY**

MLN	22
Building Virtual Appliances	32
Rocks Clustering	38