

Do you use virtualized desktops for legacy/seldom used applications?

[closed]

Asked 16 years, 4 months ago Modified 16 years, 2 months ago

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I wondered if anyone uses virtualized desktop PCs (running WinXP Pro or older) to have some old applications that are seldom used available for some ongoing tasks.

Say you have a really old project that every once in a while needs a document update in a database system or

something like that. The database application is running on a virtualized desktop that is only started when needed.

I think we could save energy, hardware and space if we would virtualize some of those old boxes. Any setups in your company?

edit Licensing could be of concern, but I guess you have a valid license for the old desktop box. Maybe the license isn't valid in a VM environment, I'd definitely check that before.

Sure enough, if the application is performance critic, virtualization could hurt. But I'm thinking about some kind of outdated application that is still used to perform, say a calculation every 12 weeks for a certain customer/service.

desktop

virtualization

legacy

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edited Aug 21, 2008 at 12:17

asked Aug 21, 2008 at 9:25



cringe

13.9k ● 15 ● 71 ● 104

10 Answers

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1



I use virtualized desktops for:

- Support that requires VPN software I do not want on my own desktop. This also lets a whole team share the support computer for a specific customer.
- A legacy system which we use several different versions of (depending on customer's version) and they're not really compatible so its good to have a virtualized desktop for each version.

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answered Aug 21, 2008 at 12:23



[Magnus Lindhe](#)

7,287 ● 5 ● 51 ● 62



0



We use virtualisation to test on a variety of Operating Systems - the server application runs under linux, and we have a production (real) server, and a couple of test servers, which are all VMs.

The client runs under Windows, which, being an OS X user I have to run in a VM, and the other developer I work with runs an XP VM on his 8-core Vista box.

(I also have a seperate VM for running CAD software, but that's not *really* programming)

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answered Aug 21, 2008 at 9:53



[Matthew Schinckel](#)

35.6k ● 6 ● 90 ● 121



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It depends on the requirements of the legacy systems.

Very often if a system is reliant on a certain clock frequency, then it's better and more reliable to keep the older OS systems running as Virtualized OS' can do funny things to performance.

If the legacy systems aren't that critical, then go for it!

One piece of advice I would give is to ensure that the system works *FULLY* before chucking out your old 3.11 systems as I have been stung before! To fully perform the testing can cost more money than you might save, but it's up to anyone who makes the decisions to ensure that is considered.

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answered Aug 21, 2008 at 9:57



TK.

47.8k ● 47 ● 121 ● 148



0

We use virtualisation for testing out applications on Vista. Or rather customers do the testing and we use virtualisation to reproduce the bugs they complain about.



I guess the thing that would stop me from using lots of virtual instances of my favourite proprietary OS would be licencing. I presume Microsoft would want me to have a licence for every installation, virtual or otherwise?

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answered Aug 21, 2008 at 12:01



Ned

2,252 ● 18 ● 24



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We use VMWare with a virtual windows XP here at work to run some old development tools with very expensive licenses that don't run at all on Vista. So VMWare saved us about \$5000 in licenses.



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answered Aug 21, 2008 at 13:08



c0m4

4,423 ● 10 ● 36 ● 40



0

Since my last machine upgrade I have been running virtualised OS's for a number of tasks. For example I use a different set of Visual Studio plugins for managed and c++ unmanaged development. Some things I found:



1. Run your vmware setup on a machine with plenty of resources. I'll repeat...plenty of resources! A fast



quad and 8GB of memory is what my current machine is running and it runs sweet (warning you need a 64bit OS for the 8GB!).

2. I wouldn't worry about app performance if your current physical hardware is old (2+ years). With a decent machine I find the virtualized apps run faster than on the legacy hardware!
3. When upgrading to a new workstation, p2v your old workstation. No need to worry about synergy or a KVM in the transition period any more!

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answered Aug 21, 2008 at 13:25



Nic Strong

6,602 ● 4 ● 37 ● 50



0



I've used virtualisation so I could take my development environment around with me while travelling. As long as I could install MS Virtual PC, (and the PC/laptop had generous enough RAM) then I could access all my tools, VPN, Remote desktop links, SQL databases etc...

Worked fairly well, just a little slower than I like. I could have carted a laptop around, but found a small portable harddrive to be lighter/easier and just as effective.

However, consulting for several clients - all with different VPN requirements/passwords/databases/versions of frameworks & tools etc, I've found that having a Virtualised support environment for each is well worth it. Then multiple users have access to what is needed when

supporting each client - they just need to either remote desktop (or run directly) the virtualised instance.

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answered Aug 21, 2008 at 13:38



[davewasthere](#)

3,018 ● 2 ● 25 ● 25



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I've used VMs to handle work-related tasks that I didn't want / couldn't do on the company-issued laptop.

Specifically, I needed to have several editions of the JRE running at the same time, which Java doesn't really like.



To get around this, I built several VMs that each ran the one tool I needed in trimmed-down XP instances.



Another thing to consider is that if you have a 5-yr-old server running some app, it's probably going to run just fine on a VM on new hardware. So, if you have a rack of old devices, buying one or two "real" servers, installing something like ESX (I'm most familiar with that tool, though Xen and others exist), then use a physical-to-virtual conversion tool to get those old devices switched to VMs so you can reduce your electricity consumption, management headaches, and worries about a critical device failing and not being able to find hardware for it.

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answered Sep 22, 2008 at 16:27



[warren](#)

33.4k ● 23 ● 89 ● 128



0



We use VM for legacy apps, and have retired old machines that served up those apps. It eliminated the concern of matching drivers from NT to Win2k3. From a disaster recovery perspective this also helped as we couldn't find boxes to support the old apps at the DR data center.

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answered Sep 28, 2008 at 11:52



[David Robbins](#)

10k ● 7 ● 54 ● 83



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The likes of VMWare are invaluable tools for browser testing of web applications. You can pretty easily test many combinations of OS and browser without having rank upon rank of physical machines running that software.

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answered Sep 28, 2008 at 11:56



[skaffman](#)

403k ● 96 ● 824 ● 774