

Workstation Virtualization Options

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Many options exist for running VMs on a workstation (Desktop / Laptop) with varying licenses, features, and support. This includes running VMs on Windows, Linux, and MacOS for use cases such as R&D, demo environments, running an OS that is different than the installed operating system, and creating mini virtual labs of multiple running VMs running on a single workstation. While running VMs is a powerful and flexible resource it can also introduce security vulnerabilities if not properly managed.

There are many free and paid applications available to run VMs on a workstation. Please do not download and install any application other than those recommended below. If there is a use case that falls outside the alternatives or recommended options, please open a [General Request](#) and a member of the IST Service Delivery or Compute Teams will review.

Note: Oracle VirtualBox Extension Pack is expressly prohibited and will be uninstalled automatically if detected.

Alternatives to workstation hosted virtual machines

Esri hosts VMs both on premise and in the public cloud across several sites and cloud providers. VMs built in a hosted environment have the advantage of being built to meet Esri security standards and enabled with on-going maintenance for patches and required agent updates.

Esri's on-prem private cloud is available for self-service deployment for select departments. Logon to <https://ecs.esri.com> to access an extensive catalog of Operating Systems and VM sizes.

An alternate way to check for access is to use the [On-Premise Virtual Machine \(VM\)](#) form. This form will prompt if ECS access is available and if not, will present a form to request a VM to be built on your behalf.

For a public cloud VM request, please use the [Provision an External Cloud Resource](#) form which supports deployments to Amazon, Azure, or Google Cloud Platform.

Workstation Based Virtualization Recommendations

If a cloud hosted VM does not fit the use case, please use the [Software Request](#) form to request one of the following applications:

1. Windows
 - a. VMware Workstation Player – Great for running a single VM at a time with multiple VMs can be stored on disk
 - b. VMware Workstation Pro – Run multiple VMs simultaneously with additional advance VM management features and automation
2. MacOS
 - a. Parallels Desktop for Mac Business Edition – Additional tools for developers such as integration with automation tools such as Jenkins and container support
 - b. *Note: Macs powered by the Apple M1/M2 chipset can only run Arm version of Windows and cannot not run standard x86/x64 versions of Windows. Support is limited. If Windows is needed on MacOS consider one of the alternative solutions above or open a General Request to explore the use case.*
3. Linux
 - a. VMware Workstation Player – Great for running a single VM at a time with multiple VMs can be stored on disk
 - b. VMware Workstation Pro – Run multiple VMs simultaneously with additional advance VM management features and automation