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VMware Tools for XenServer and Hyper-V Admins

With the days of datacenters only hosting a single vendor hypervisor, such as vMware's vSphere, being numbered, it is time to start learning more about how to administer all of them using some of the tools provided by VMware and a few from other vendors. Let's take a look at some tools to get your started on the road to becoming an "All Around" vAdmin.

First, let's start with the easy one and the one that you need to know. If you have been administering Hyper-V for a while, then you have no doubt been using PowerShell to perform some of not most of your daily tasks. If you haven't yet dived into PowerShell, I suggest you get into it as soon as you can as this is the basis for all things administration for VMware products, including their vSphere powerShell product [VMware's PowerCLI](#). PowerCLI is a collection of tools called "cmdlets", written specifically for vSphere, which uses the PowerShell scripting environment. If you know PowerShell, then getting to know PowerCLI is just about learning the cmdlets. It is a great knowledge set to have in general since many other software companies are providing PowerShell SDK (Software Development Kits) that allow for administration by simply loading their supplied modules. Obviously, being a core product from Microsoft, Hyper-V has a complete PowerShell and Operating System integration built-in, while XenServer is still limited in its adoption of PowerShell, it has seen some significant improvements in the [version 6.0 release of the SDK](#) and hopefully Citrix will continue to add more. VMware is solid on their commitment to PowerShell now and in the future.

Anyone that has worked with VMware for a while knows that they really do not make any attempt to work well with, or take any initiative to work with, other vendors management solutions. They have always wanted vSphere administrators to use the vSphere Client, or now as of version 5 and future versions, the vSphere Web Client. One thing that they did do back in 2011 was to have a Fling posted in the [VMware Labs website](#) called "[XVP](#)". This add-on to the vSphere Client allows you to administrate Hyper-V hosts inside the vSphere Client. The plugin is only for vCenter version 4.0 and 4.1, it is severely limited in what it can do with Hyper-V and, of course, being a Fling from the Labs, it is also completely unsupported. While an honest effort by VMware developers, it does fall short.

Microsoft has really led the charge with proving a more complete multi-tenant hypervisor administrator solution with its release of [System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2012](#). This newly released version really takes it up a notch and provides a more complete administration interface for Hyper-V, XenServer, and VMware. Most of the work that SCVMM 2012 does behind the scenes of the interface for vSphere tasks is, of course, done using PowerShell. Although it is now offered as one of the products in [Microsoft's "Private Cloud"](#) product offering rather than a standalone product, this new version is worth taking a look at, even if just for a trial run, to see

if it would suit your administrative needs. If you live in a Hyper-V shop now, you probably already have this infrastructure in place.

There is also another newcomer to the multi-hypervisor administration market called [Hotlink](#). This company, which was founded in 2010 from the folks who ran FastScale before VMware bought them, offers a plugin to the vSphere Client that allows for administering Hyper-V and XenServer environments. I have not been able to test their product since they do not offer any way to trial it and, from what I can tell from their website, the only way to look at their product is to attend one of their Webinars. That's really not a very good replacement for having a trial in your environment. But, from what I could gather from the screenshots and videos provided, it does look promising. One big issue I do see for them though is the possibility that eventually VMware will do away with their "fat" vSphere Client and move entirely towards the Web Client. This should prove to be a problem for plugin products like these.

In my world, which is one of managing multiple hypervisors on both the server and client platforms, knowing and using PowerShell is a definitive key in my administration duties. I want to emphasize that you really should get to know this technology, and understand how all of these products can be managed within a single pane of PowerShell glass.