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- Home **Articles** UserTV Press Releases Dictionary Books Education Careers B-Channels Resources Forums Blogs Classifieds

Tuesday 19 Aug, 2008 Web ComputerUser

Articles >

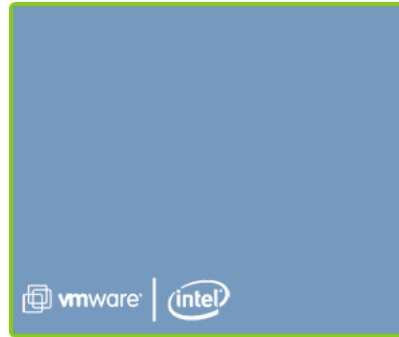
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- Article Archives**

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- Opinions
- How-to-Advice
- News & Reviews
- Local Profiles & News
- E-business
- CU Gamer

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- Networking / Security
- Operating Systems
- Software
- Programming
- OpenSource
- Database
- Internet
- Wireless
- Mobile Computing
- Graphics
- Multimedia
- Gadgets
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- Citrix
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- Microsoft
- Oracle
- PHP
- SUN
- VoIP
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- Marketing
- Linux
- Printers
- Games
- Go Green
- Cyber Security
- Employment
- Education



Articles >> Software

Virtual Computing: Businesses Can Save Money, Time and Energy with this IT Approach

Posted by : Dave Murray CEO, Convergence Networks | Fri, Jul 25 2008 | 01:07:50

Tags : virtualization,vmware,virtual servers,go green,business solutions

Rating : ☆☆☆☆☆

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Most of us have seen a magic trick where a magician can mysteriously make a rabbit appear from thin air. Then, suddenly the rabbit becomes two rabbits, and three rabbits, until finally the stage is covered with cute little rabbits running around. It's very entertaining. Under the pressures of a struggling economy and demands for a greener environment, the advent of computing 'virtualization' could not have come at a better time. While it may be a big word, the concept is straightforward. Virtualization can take a lesson from the magician and turn a single server into multiple servers. This can be a huge advantage for small businesses, but it can be confusing too. Let's break down some barriers to understanding virtualization by starting with some basics.

Business owners and managers who are not technology specialists—but need to manage the technology process—can begin to understand virtualization in the following manner. At some point their businesses may have grown to one, two, three or more individual computers. At some point as they continued to grow they noticed a technology bottleneck. Hence, they decided to purchase a server, which allowed all of the users to convert to a centralized computing model and make sure their business data was backed up properly. Let's just pause there for a moment and understand what is happening. Typically that single server is providing computing services to the employees as intended, but in most cases that single server is being underutilized. In other words the server is consuming lots of power and the full capabilities of the server are not being used. Keep in mind that the server is using a single operating system such as Microsoft Small [Business Server](#) 2003 or Microsoft Server 2008.

Now, let's assume that the business continues to grow and it is time to adopt an in-house email platform or a specialized software application. The historical route that a company had to pursue was to purchase a second server. Then, the company incurred the cost of the new server, additional licensing, additional support costs AND higher power consumption. So, the small business needed to accept that fulfilling growth demands meant very high technology costs. That's just the way things were.

With the evolution of virtualization, things are changing dramatically. Virtualization allows your support company to take the original server, add a second operating system, and use both the existing software applications and the new software applications on the original server hardware. The small business just realized a big time savings. They eliminated a significant portion of the costs referenced above. And, they are contributing to a greener technology environment. Even better, the energy savings associated with virtualization are significant, further helping the bottom line as well as the environment.

Staff members can use any application on either of the two virtual servers (running on the same single hardware server) at any time. Just like the original single server, the two virtual servers will be fully protected and the software kept completely up to date. Obviously, the savings in terms of convenience, time, money, lower support costs and energy will add up quickly. That said, virtualization is not for every network environment. There will always be situations where the more historical route is required.

The benefits of virtualization continue beyond just the streamlining and improved functioning of your overall company computer system. It helps maximize resources by allowing the company to get the most out of the machines it already owns, rather than the expense of acquiring more or new hardware. For companies looking to be more green, this further reduces the impact on the planet.

An IT services company or professional provider can provide a more in-depth analysis of your company's current computer setup, and make recommendations on how to initiate virtualization at your office. The benefits of cost savings and long-term stability and reliability of your system are well worth exploring for your business—a 'virtual' no-brainer.

About the Author: Dave Murray is the CEO of Convergence Networks (www.cnwi.net), a multi-faceted, comprehensive IT solutions provider headquartered in Portland, OR that serves clients in 11 states. Convergence creates relationships with businesses of every size, and considers a commitment to quality

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