Virtualization on SUSE Linux with Benefits and Setup

Virtualization is a technology that allows a single physical server (host) to run multiple virtual machines (guests), each with its own operating system. Use it to reduce hardware costs, save power and space, and improve infrastructure flexibility and productivity. By the end of this article, you will understand the benefits of virtualization and the basic setup of a virtual machine host and guest environment.

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1 Introduction to virtualization

Virtualization is a technology that provides a way for a machine (VM Host Server) to run another operating system (VM Guest) on top of the host operating system.

1.1 How does virtualization work?

The primary component of VM Host Server that enables virtualization is a *hypervisor*. A hypervisor is a layer of software that runs directly on VM Host Server's hardware. It controls platform resources, sharing them among multiple VM Guests and their operating systems by presenting virtualized hardware interfaces to each VM Guest.

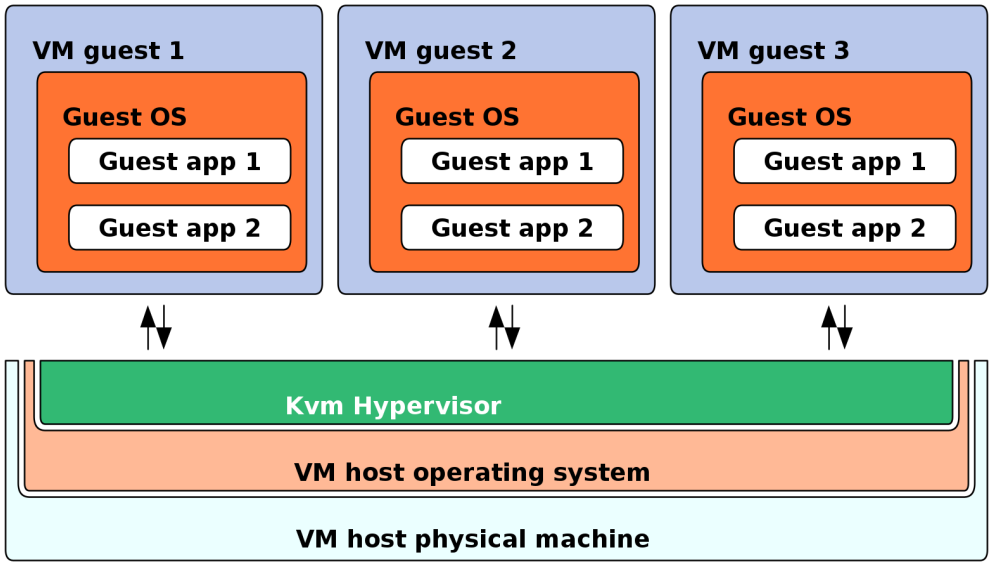

FIGURE 1: A GENERAL SCHEMA OF VIRTUALIZATION

1.2 Benefits of virtualization

Virtualization brings a lot of advantages while providing the same service as a hardware server.

Virtualization reduces the cost of your infrastructure. Servers are mainly used to provide a service to a customer. A virtualized operating system can provide the same service but with the following advantages:

- Less hardware: you can run several operating systems on one host, therefore all hardware maintenance is reduced.
- Less power/cooling: less hardware means you do not need to invest more in electric power, backup power, and cooling if you need more service.
- Save space: your data center space is saved because you do not need more hardware servers (fewer servers than services running).
- Less management: using a VM Guest simplifies the administration of your infrastructure.
- Agility and productivity: virtualization provides *migration* capabilities, *live migration* and *snapshots*. These features reduce downtime and bring an easy way to move your service from one place to another without any service interruption.

2 Installation of virtualization components

To run a virtualization server (VM Host Server) that can host multiple guest systems (VM Guests), you need to install required virtualization components on the server. These components vary depending on which virtualization technology you want to use.

You can install the virtualization tools required to run a VM Host Server either when installing the system (see the manual installation (https://documentation.suse.com/sles/16.0/html/SLES-x86-64-agama-based-installation/index.html#agama-manual-installation)), or from an alerady installed system by installing a virtualization pattern. The later option is described bellow:

```
> sudo zypper install -t pattern PATTERN_NAME
```

Replace the *`PATTERN_NAME`* with one of the following values:

`kvm_server`
: Installs a basic VM Host Server with the KVM and QEMU environments.

`kvm_tools`
: Installs `libvirt` tools for managing and monitoring VM Guests in the KVM environment.

3 Virtualization modes

Virtualization is a technology that provides a way for a machine (VM Host Server) to run another operating system (VM Guest) on top of the host operating system. There are two basic modes of hosting VM Guests on virtual machines—*full virtualization* mode and *paravirtual* mode.

Full virtualization (FV)

FV lets virtual machines run unmodified operating systems. It uses either Binary Translation or hardware-assisted virtualization technology, such as AMD* Virtualization or Intel* Virtualization Technology, to improve performance on processors that support it. In FV mode, VM Guest is also called the *Hardware Virtual Machine* (HVM).

Tip

Certain guest operating systems hosted in full virtualization mode can be configured to use drivers from the SUSE Virtual Machine Drivers Pack (VMDP) instead of drivers included in the operating system. Running virtual machine drivers improves performance on guest operating systems, such as Windows Server.

Paravirtualization (PV)

PV normally requires that guest operating systems are modified for the virtualization environment. VM Guests running in paravirtual mode have better performance than those running under full virtualization. Operating systems currently modified to run in paravirtual mode are called *paravirtualized* operating systems and include SLES.

PV on HVM (PVHVM)

PVHVM enhances HVM (see *Full virtualization (FV)*) with paravirtualized drivers, and handling of paravirtualized interrupts and timers.

4 Introduction to KVM virtualization

KVM (Kernel Virtual Machine) is a full virtualization solution that transforms the Linux kernel into a hypervisor for running multiple isolated virtual environments.

4.1 Basic components

KVM is a full virtualization solution for hardware architectures that support hardware virtualization.

VM Guests (virtual machines), virtual storage and virtual networks can be managed with QEMU tools directly or with the `libvirt`-based stack. The QEMU tools include **`qemu-system-`*`ARCH`***, the QEMU monitor, **`qemu-img`**, and **`qemu-nbd`**. A `libvirt`-based stack includes `libvirt` itself, along with `libvirt`-based applications such as **`virsh`**, **`virt-manager`**, **`virt-install`**, and **`virt-viewer`**.

4.2 KVM virtualization architecture

This full virtualization solution consists of two main components:

- A set of kernel modules (`kvm.ko`, `kvm-intel.ko`, and `kvm-amd.ko`) that provides the core virtualization infrastructure and processor-specific drivers.
- A user space program (**`qemu-system-`*`ARCH`***) that provides emulation for virtual devices and control mechanisms to manage VM Guests (virtual machines).

The term KVM more properly refers to the kernel level virtualization functionality, but is in practice more commonly used to refer to the user space component.

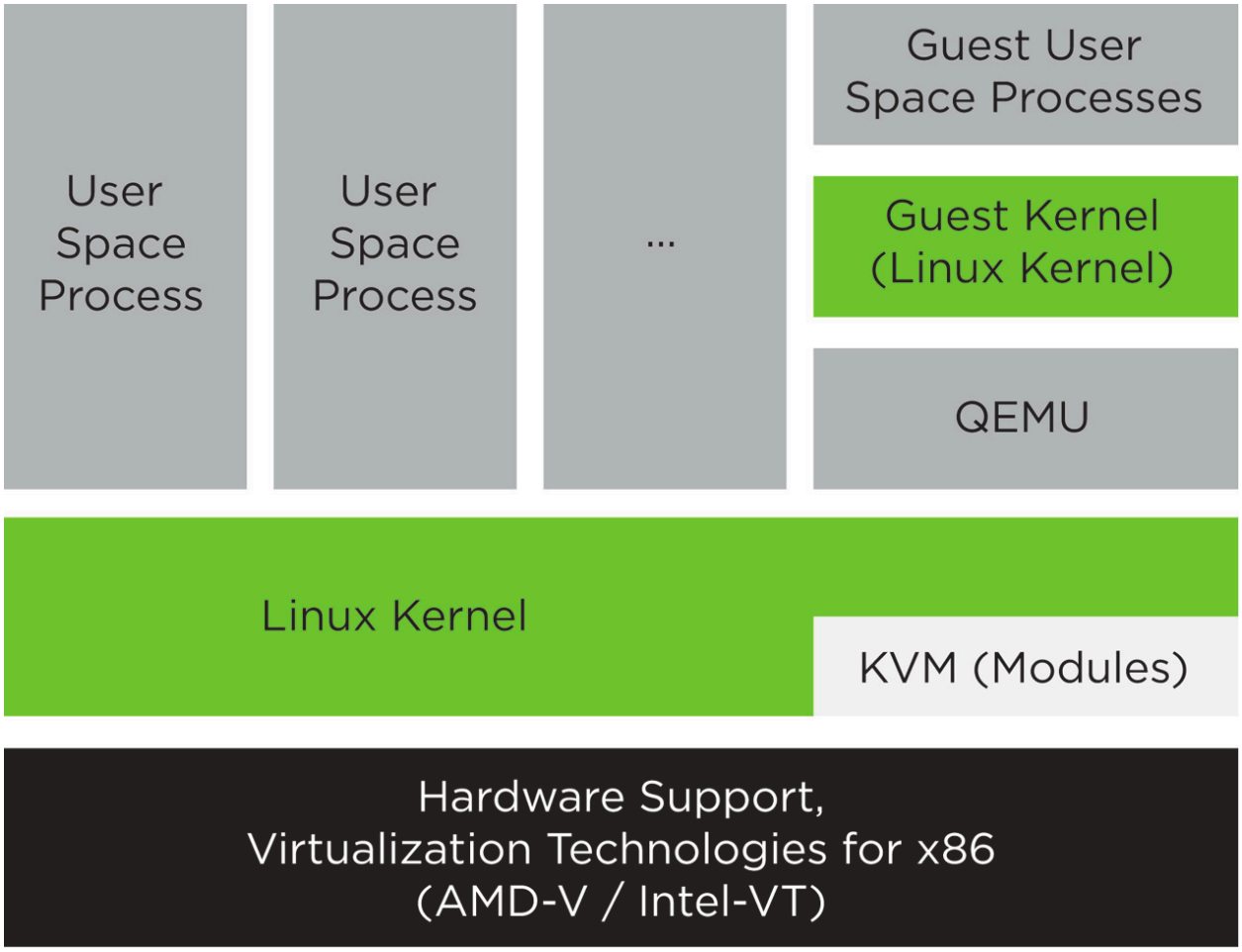

FIGURE 2: KVM VIRTUALIZATION ARCHITECTURE

5 Installation of virtualization components

To run a virtualization server (VM Host Server) that can host one or more guest systems (VM Guests), you need to install required virtualization components on the server.

5.1 Installing virtualization components

The virtualization components you need vary depending on which virtualization technology you want to use. You can install the virtualization tools required to run a VM Host Server in one of the following ways:

- By selecting a specific system role during SUSE Linux Enterprise Server installation on the VM Host Server
- By installing specific installation patterns on an already installed and running SUSE Linux Enterprise Server.

5.1.1 Specifying a system role

You can install all the tools required for virtualization during the installation of SUSE Linux Enterprise Server on the VM Host Server. During the installation, you are presented with the *System Role* screen.

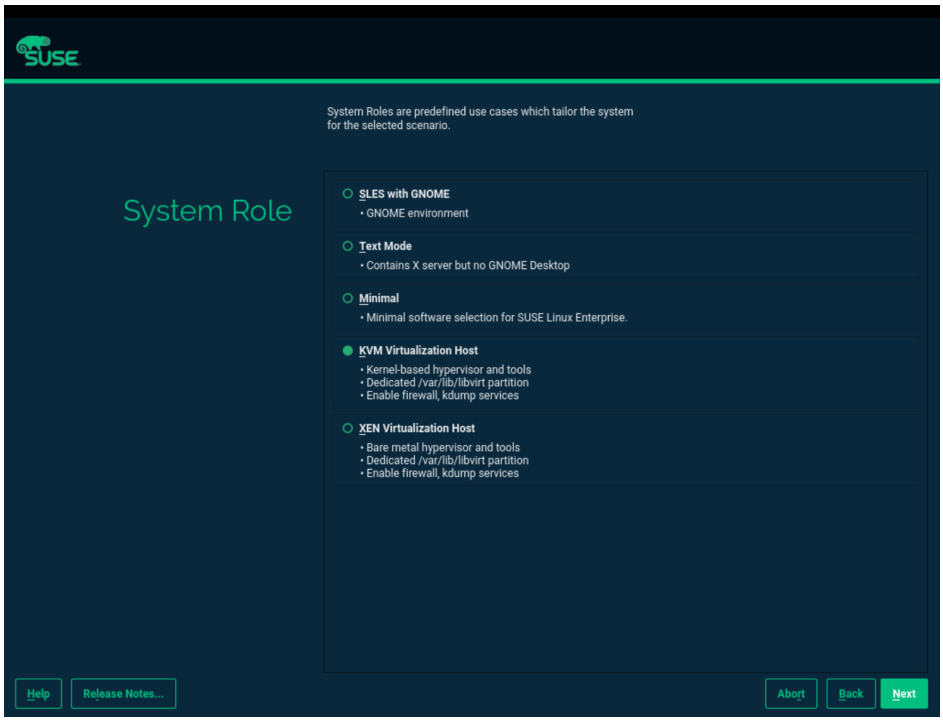

FIGURE 3: SYSTEM ROLE SCREEN

Here you can select the *KVM Virtualization Host* role. The appropriate software selection and setup is automatically performed during SUSE Linux Enterprise Server installation.

Tip

Both virtualization system roles create a dedicated `/var/lib/libvirt` partition, and enable the `firewalld` and Kdump services.

5.1.2 Installing specific installation patterns

Related software packages from SUSE Linux Enterprise Server software repositories are organized into *installation patterns*. You can use these patterns to install specific virtualization components on an already running SUSE Linux Enterprise Server. Use **`zypper`** to install them:

```
zypper install -t pattern PATTERN_NAME
```

To install the KVM environment, consider the following patterns:

`kvm_server`
: Installs basic VM Host Server with the KVM and QEMU environments.

`kvm_tools`
: Installs `libvirt` tools for managing and monitoring VM Guests in KVM environment.

5.2 Enable nested virtualization in KVM

Important: Technology preview

Nested virtualization in KVM is still a technology preview. It is provided for testing purposes and is not supported.

Nested guests are KVM guests run in a KVM guest. This section describes nested guests using the following virtualization layers:

L0
: A bare metal host running KVM.

L1
: A virtual machine running on L0. Because it can run another KVM, it is called a *guest hypervisor*.

L2

A virtual machine running on L1. It is called a *nested guest*.

Nested virtualization has many advantages. You can benefit from it in the following scenarios:

- Manage your own virtual machines directly with your hypervisor of choice in cloud environments.
- Enable the live migration of hypervisors and their guest virtual machines as a single entity.

Note

Live migration of a nested VM Guest is not supported.

- Use it for software development and testing.

To enable nesting temporarily, remove the module and reload it with the `nested` KVM module parameter:

- For Intel CPUs, run:

```
> sudo modprobe -r kvm_intel && modprobe kvm_intel nested=1
```

- For AMD CPUs, run:

```
> sudo modprobe -r kvm_amd && modprobe kvm_amd nested=1
```

To enable nesting permanently, enable the `nested` KVM module parameter in the `/etc/modprobe.d/kvm_*.conf` file, depending on your CPU:

- For Intel CPUs, edit `/etc/modprobe.d/kvm_intel.conf` and add the following line:

```
options kvm_intel nested=1
```

- For AMD CPUs, edit `/etc/modprobe.d/kvm_amd.conf` and add the following line:

```
options kvm_amd nested=1
```

When your L0 host is capable of nesting, you can start an L1 guest in one of the following ways:

- Use the `-cpu host` QEMU command-line option.
- Add the `vmx` (for Intel CPUs) or the `svm` (for AMD CPUs) CPU feature to the `-cpu` QEMU command-line option, which enables virtualization for the virtual CPU.

5.2.1 VMware ESX as a guest hypervisor

If you use VMware ESX as a guest hypervisor on top of a KVM bare metal hypervisor, you may experience unstable network communication. This problem occurs especially between nested KVM guests and the KVM bare metal hypervisor or external network. The following default CPU configuration of the nested KVM guest is causing the problem:

```
<cpu mode='host-model' check='partial'/>
```

To fix it, modify the CPU configuration as follows:

```
[...]
<cpu mode='host-passthrough' check='none'>
 <cache mode='passthrough'/>
</cpu>
[...]
```

6 Command-line tools

`libvirt` includes several command-line utilities to manage virtual machines. A few of the command-line utilities are listed below:

`virsh` **(Package: libvirt-client)**

A command-line tool to manage VM Guests with similar functionality as the Virtual Machine Manager. Allows you to change a VM Guest's status (start, stop, pause, etc.), to set up new guests and devices, or to edit existing configurations. virsh is also useful to script VM Guest management operations.

`virt-install` **(Package: virt-install)**

A command-line tool for creating new VM Guests using the libvirt library. It supports graphical installations via VNC or SPICE protocols. Given suitable command-line arguments, virt-install can run completely unattended. This allows for easy automation of guest installs. virt-install is the default installation tool used by the Virtual Machine Manager.

`remote-viewer` **(Package: virt-viewer)**

A simple viewer of a remote desktop. It supports SPICE and VNC protocols.

`virt-clone` **(Package: virt-install)**

A tool for cloning existing virtual machine images using the libvirt hypervisor management library.

`virt-host-validate` **(Package: libvirt-client)**

A tool that validates whether the host is configured in a suitable way to run libvirt hypervisor drivers.

7 Converting VMware virtual machines to KVM with `virt-v2v`

`virt-v2v` converts virtual machines from VMware and other hypervisors to run on KVM. This guide covers the prerequisites, preparation, and conversion process, with a focus on converting Windows Server 2022 guests.

7.1 Overview

`virt-v2v` is a command-line tool for converting third-party virtual machines into a format that runs on QEMU/KVM. It is part of the **`virt-v2v`** package and uses libguestfs under the hood.

SUSE Virtualization uses **`virt-v2v`** via the Forklift migration tool to convert VMware virtual machines. The same tool can be used directly on the command line for individual conversions.

Note: Supported source formats

`virt-v2v` supports conversion from VMware (VMX/VMDK), Xen, libvirt, and physical machines. This section covers VMware to KVM conversion.

7.2 Prerequisites

Before converting a virtual machine, ensure the following requirements are met on the KVM host:

- `virt-v2v` package installed:

```
> sudo zypper install virt-v2v
```

- `guestfs-winsupport` package installed (required for Windows guests):

```
> sudo zypper install guestfs-winsupport
```

- SUSE Linux Enterprise Virtual Machine Driver Pack ISO image. Download the latest SLE VMDP ISO from the SUSE Customer Center or the SUSE download portal.

- Source VMware VM files (VMX and VMDK) accessible on the KVM host, either locally or via NFS.
- Sufficient disk space on the target host to store the converted VM disk images.

7.3 Preparing the VMDP drivers

For Windows guests, **`virt-v2v`** requires virtio drivers and Windows tools to be available on the host. The SLE VMDP ISO provides a helper script that sets up the correct directory structure.

7.3.1 Setting up VMDP drivers

Mount the SLE VMDP ISO and run the **`virt-v2v-vmdp.sh`** script from the `v2v_scripts` directory:

1. Mount the SLE VMDP ISO:

```
> sudo mount -o loop /path/to/vmdp-VERSION.iso /mnt
```

2. Run the setup script:

```
> sudo /mnt/v2v_scripts/virt-v2v-vmdp.sh /mnt/vmdp-VERSION
```

3. Unmount the ISO:

```
> sudo umount /mnt
```

The script performs the following actions:

- Installs virtio drivers to `/usr/share/virtio-win/` in the directory layout expected by **`virt-v2v`**.
- Places `pvxsvc.exe` and other required Windows tools in `/usr/share/virt-tools/`.
- Creates placeholder files for the QEMU Guest Agent MSI and Balloon Server to suppress non-critical warnings.

Important: Do not manually copy driver files

Do not manually extract and copy VMDP files to `/usr/share/virt-tools/` or `/usr/share/virtio-win/`. The directory structure expected by **`virt-v2v`** on SLES 16.0 differs from earlier versions. Always use the **`virt-v2v-vmdp.sh`** script to ensure the correct layout.

7.4 Converting a VMware VM

Use the **`virt-v2v`** command to convert the VMware VM. The following example converts a Windows Server 2022 VM:

```
> sudo virt-v2v -i vmx /path/to/windows2022.vmx \
  -o local -of qcow2 -os /path/to/output/dir \
  --network vmware-network-name:target-bridge-name
```

Key command options:

`-i vmx`
: Input mode: read VMware VMX configuration file.

`-o local`
: Output mode: write disk image and XML configuration to the local filesystem. Use `-o libvirt` to define the VM directly in libvirt (requires pre-configured storage pools).

`-of qcow2`
: Output disk format. `qcow2` is recommended for space efficiency.

`-os` *`output-storage`*
: Output storage path. For `-o local`, this is a directory path. For `-o libvirt`, this is a libvirt storage pool name.

`--network` *`source:target`*
: Map a VMware network name to a target bridge or libvirt network name. If omitted, the network device mapping may require manual adjustment in the generated XML.

7.4.1 Using libvirt output mode

To define the converted VM directly in libvirt, use `-o libvirt`:

```
> sudo virt-v2v -i vmx /path/to/windows2022.vmx \
  -o libvirt -of qcow2 -os default \
  --network vm-network:default
```

The `-os` parameter specifies a libvirt storage pool name. Ensure the pool exists and has sufficient free space before running the conversion.

7.5 Post-conversion steps

After a successful conversion, follow these steps to complete the migration:

1. Start the converted VM. On first boot, the VM will install virtio drivers. The VM may reboot one or two times during this process.
2. After the VM stabilizes, power it off and change the video adapter to virtio (viogpudo) for optimal graphics performance. This can be done via **`virsh edit`** or the Virtual Machine Manager GUI.
3. Start the VM again. It will complete the driver installation and boot normally.
4. Verify that virtio drivers are active for disk, network, and graphics in the Windows Device Manager.

Note: UEFI boot requirement

Windows Server 2022 and other modern Windows guests may require UEFI boot firmware on the target. **`virt-v2v`** detects this automatically and sets the appropriate firmware type. If the VM fails to boot, verify the firmware setting in the VM configuration.

7.6 Expected warnings during conversion

The following warnings are informational and can be safely ignored:

QEMU Guest Agent MSI not found

`virt-v2v: warning: QEMU Guest Agent MSI not found on tools ISO/directory.`

SLE VMDP does not provide a standalone QEMU Guest Agent MSI package. The guest agent is included in the VMDP `setup.exe` and is installed automatically during first boot of the converted VM.

Balloon Server not found

`virt-v2v: warning: Balloon Server (blnsvr.exe) not found on tools ISO/directory.`

SLE VMDP uses `pvxsvc.exe` instead of `blnsvr.exe` to provide balloon functionality. The service is installed during the first boot of the converted VM.

Random seed could not be set

`virt-v2v: warning: random seed could not be set for this type of guest`

This warning indicates that **virt-v2v** was unable to set a random seed for the guest. This does not affect the conversion result.

7.7 Troubleshooting

7.7.1 `Hivex.Error` during inspection

If **virt-v2v** fails with:

```
virt-v2v: error: libguestfs error: inspect_os: internal error:
inspect_os: unhandled exception thrown: Hivex.Error
```

This error occurs when libguestfs cannot parse the Windows registry hive files. Possible causes and resolutions:

- Ensure you are running the latest version of `virt-v2v` and `guestfs-winsupport`.
- Set the environment variable `LIBGUESTFS_BACKEND=direct` before running the conversion:

  ```
  > export LIBGUESTFS_BACKEND=direct
  ```

- Verify that the source VMDK disk is not corrupted by running a disk check on the VMware VM before conversion.

7.7.2 Virtio drivers not found

If you see the warning:

```
virt-v2v: warning: there are no virtio drivers available for this
version of Windows (10.0 x86_64 Server win2k22).  virt-v2v looks
for drivers in /usr/share/virtio-win
```

This means **virt-v2v** could not find the virtio drivers for the detected Windows version. The guest will be configured with slower emulated devices instead of virtio.

Resolution: run the **virt-v2v-vmdp.sh** script from the SLE VMDP ISO. The script installs drivers in the correct directory layout. On SLES 16, the expected driver path for Windows Server 2022 is `/usr/share/virtio-win/drivers/amd64/2k22/`.

Important: Do not manually create symlinks as a workaround

While creating a symbolic link from `2k22` to another driver directory (e.g., `win11`) may suppress the warning, it is not a supported configuration. Always use the **`virt-v2v-vmdp.sh`** script with an up-to-date SLE VMDP ISO.

7.7.3 VM fails to boot after conversion (Windows Server 2019/2022/2025)

After converting Windows Server 2019, 2022, or 2025, the VM may fail to boot with an "Inaccessible Boot Device" error or a page fault blue screen.

This issue is caused by the virtio block driver installation path. On these Windows versions, the VMDP setup installs the updated virtio block driver to the driver store directory (`\windows\system32\driverstore\filerepository`) using DIRID 13, while removing the driver from `\windows\system32\drivers` (DIRID 12). Windows fails to locate the block driver on next boot.

Resolution: ensure you are using a recent SLE VMDP ISO version (2.5 or later) that includes the fix. The updated VMDP `setup.exe` copies the driver to both locations, allowing the VM to boot correctly.

If the VM fails to boot with an older VMDP version, you can manually copy the virtio block driver from the driver store to `\windows\system32\drivers` to restore boot capability.

7.7.4 Network mapping issues

If the `--network` mapping fails, the converted VM may not have a correctly configured network interface. To resolve:

- Verify the source network name matches the network name defined in the VMware VMX file.
- Ensure the target bridge or libvirt network exists on the host before conversion.
- If using `-o libvirt`, create a libvirt network with a matching name using **`virsh net-create`**.

7.7.5 Debugging **`virt-v2v`**

To enable verbose output for debugging, run **`virt-v2v`** with the `-v` option:

```
> sudo virt-v2v -v -i vmx /path/to/vm.vmx -o local -of qcow2 -os /output/dir
```

For additional libguestfs debugging, set:

```
> export LIBGUESTFS_DEBUG=1
```

```
> export LIBGUESTFS_TRACE=1
```

7.8 VMDP ISO contents and other uses

7.8.1 Installing drivers at VM creation

The VMDP ISO can be loaded as a virtual CD in a KVM VM to provide VirtIO Block or SCSI drivers during Windows installation. On the *Where do you want to install Windows* screen, select *Load driver* and follow the prompts to select the appropriate driver.

7.8.2 Full VMDP contents for Xen and KVM

The ISO also contains the full VMDP `setup.exe` along with expanded contents for installation flexibility. These can be used for both Xen and KVM hosted Windows VMs.

7.9 Complete example: Windows Server 2022

The following example demonstrates a full conversion of a Windows Server 2022 VM from VMware to KVM:

1. Mount the SLE VMDP ISO:

   ```
   > sudo mount -o loop /data/isos/vmdp/vmdp-VERSION.iso /mnt
   ```

2. Run the setup script:

   ```
   > sudo /mnt/v2v_scripts/virt-v2v-vmdp.sh /mnt/vmdp-VERSION
   ```

3. Unmount the ISO:

   ```
   > sudo umount /mnt
   ```

4. Work around the `Hivex.Error` issue by using the direct back end:

   ```
   > export LIBGUESTFS_BACKEND=direct
   ```

5. Convert the VM and define it directly in libvirt:

```
> sudo virt-v2v -i vmx /srv/vmware/windows2022/windows2022.vmx \
  -o libvirt -of qcow2 -os default \
  --network "VM Network":default
```

After conversion completes:

1. Start the VM: `virsh start windows2022`
2. Allow the VM to reboot (virtio driver installation)
3. Once stable, power off and switch video to virtio
4. Restart and verify all virtio drivers are active

8 For more information

For further steps in virtualization, refer to the following sources:

- Managing virtual machines with `libvirt` (https://documentation.suse.com/smart/virtualization-cloud/html/concept-manage-virtual-machines-libvirt/concept-manage-virtual-machines-libvirt.html)
- Configuring Virtual Machines with Virtual Machine Manager (https://documentation.suse.com/smart/virtualization-cloud/html/task-configure-virtual-machine-manager/task-configure-virtual-machine-manager.html)
- Assigning Host Devices to Virtual Machines (https://documentation.suse.com/smart/virtualization-cloud/html/vm-assign-pci-device/vm-assign-pci-device.html)
- Configuring a Virtual Disk Cache Mode (https://documentation.suse.com/smart/virtualization-cloud/html/virtual-disk-cache-mode-configure/virtual-disk-cache-mode-configure.html)
- Converting VMware Virtual Machines to KVM with virt-v2v (#virt-v2v-vmware-migration)

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Acronyms

ACPI

Advanced Configuration and Power Interface (ACPI) specification provides an open standard for device configuration and power management by the operating system.

AER

Advanced Error Reporting

AER is a capability provided by the PCI Express specification which allows for reporting of PCI errors and recovery from some of them.

APIC

Advanced Programmable Interrupt Controller (APIC) is a family of interrupt controllers.

BDF

Bus:Device:Function

Notation used to succinctly describe PCI and PCIe devices.

CG

Control Groups

Feature to limit, account and isolate resource usage (CPU, memory, disk I/O, etc.).

EDF

Earliest Deadline First

This scheduler provides weighted CPU sharing in an intuitive way and uses real-time algorithms to ensure time guarantees.

EPT

Extended Page Tables

Performance in a virtualized environment is close to that in a native environment. Virtualization does create some overheads, however. These come from the virtualization of the CPU, the *MMU*, and the I/O devices. In some recent x86 processors AMD and Intel have begun to provide hardware extensions to help bridge this performance gap. In 2006, both vendors introduced their first generation hardware support for x86 virtualization with AMD-Virtualization (AMD-V) and Intel® VT-x technologies. Recently Intel introduced its second generation of hardware support that incorporates MMU-virtualization, called Extended Page Tables (EPT). EPT-enabled systems can improve performance compared to using shadow paging for *MMU* virtualization. EPT increases memory access latencies for a few workloads. This cost can be reduced by effectively using large pages in the guest and the hypervisor.

HAP

High Assurance Platform

HAP combines hardware and software technologies to improve workstation and network security.

HVM

Hardware Virtual Machine.

IOMMU

Input/Output Memory Management Unit

IOMMU (AMD* technology) is a memory management unit (*MMU*) that connects a direct memory access-capable (DMA-capable) I/O bus to the main memory.

KSM

Kernel Same Page Merging

KSM allows for automatic sharing of identical memory pages between guests to save host memory. KVM is optimized to use KSM if enabled on the VM Host Server.

MMU

Memory Management Unit

is a computer hardware component responsible for handling accesses to memory requested by the CPU. Its functions include translation of virtual addresses to physical addresses (that is, virtual memory management), memory protection, cache control, bus arbitration and in simpler computer architectures (especially 8-bit systems) bank switching.

PAE

Physical Address Extension

32-bit x86 operating systems use Physical Address Extension (PAE) mode to enable addressing of more than 4 GB of physical memory. In PAE mode, page table entries (PTEs) are 64 bits in size.

PCID

Process-context identifiers

These are a facility by which a logical processor may cache information for multiple linear-address spaces so that the processor may retain cached information when software switches to a different linear address space. INVPCID instruction is used for fine-grained *TLB* flush, which is benefit for kernel.

PCIe

Peripheral Component Interconnect Express

PCIe was designed to replace older PCI, PCI-X and AGP bus standards. PCIe has numerous improvements including a higher maximum system bus throughput, a lower I/O pin count and smaller physical footprint. Moreover it also has a more detailed error detection and reporting mechanism (*AER*), and a native hotplug functionality. It is also backward compatible with PCI.

PSE and PSE36

Page Size Extended

PSE refers to a feature of x86 processors that allows for pages larger than the traditional 4 KiB size. PSE-36 capability offers 4 more bits, in addition to the normal 10 bits, which are used inside a page directory entry pointing to a large page. This allows a large page to be located in 36-bit address space.

PT

Page Table

A page table is the data structure used by a virtual memory system in a computer operating system to store the mapping between virtual addresses and physical addresses. Virtual addresses are those unique to the accessing process. Physical addresses are those unique to the hardware (RAM).

QXL

QXL is a cirrus VGA framebuffer (8M) driver for virtualized environment.

RVI or NPT

Rapid Virtualization Indexing, Nested Page Tables

An AMD second generation hardware-assisted virtualization technology for the processor memory management unit (*MMU*).

SATA

Serial ATA

SATA is a computer bus interface that connects host bus adapters to mass storage devices such as hard disks and optical drives.

Seccomp2-based sandboxing

Sandboxed environment where only predetermined system calls are permitted for added protection against malicious behavior.

SPICE

Simple Protocol for Independent Computing Environments

TCG

Tiny Code Generator

Instructions are emulated rather than executed by the CPU.

THP

Transparent Huge Pages

This allows CPUs to address memory using pages larger than the default 4 KB. This helps reduce memory consumption and CPU cache usage. KVM is optimized to use THP (via madvise and opportunistic methods) if enabled on the VM Host Server.

TLB

Translation Lookaside Buffer

TLB is a cache that memory management hardware uses to improve virtual address translation speed. All current desktop, notebook, and server processors use a TLB to map virtual and physical address spaces, and it is nearly always present in any hardware that uses virtual memory.

VCPU

A scheduling entity, containing each state for virtualized CPU.

VDI

Virtual Desktop Infrastructure

VFIO

Since kernel v3.6; a new method of accessing PCI devices from user space called VFIO.

VHS

Virtualization Host Server

VM root

VMM will run in *VMX* root operation and guest software will run in *VMX* non-root operation. Transitions between *VMX* root operation and *VMX* non-root operation are called *VMX* transitions.

VMCS

Virtual Machine Control Structure

VMX non-root operation and VMX transitions are controlled by a data structure called a virtual-machine control structure (VMCS). Access to the VMCS is managed through a component of processor state called the VMCS pointer (one per logical processor). The value of the VMCS pointer is the 64-bit address of the VMCS. The VMCS pointer is read and written using the instructions VMPTRST and VMPTRLD. The *VMM* configures a VMCS using the VMREAD, VMWRITE, and VMCLEAR

instructions. A *VMM* could use a different VMCS for each virtual machine that it supports. For a virtual machine with multiple logical processors (virtual processors), the *VMM* could use a different VMCS for each virtual processor.

VMDq

Virtual Machine Device Queue

Multi-queue network adapters exist which support multiple VMs at the hardware level, having separate packet queues associated to the different hosted VMs (by means of the IP addresses of the VMs).

VMM

Virtual Machine Monitor (Hypervisor)

When the processor encounters an instruction or event of interest to the Hypervisor (*VMM*), it exits from guest mode back to the VMM. The VMM emulates the instruction or other event, at a fraction of native speed, and then returns to guest mode. The transitions from guest mode to the VMM and back again are high-latency operations, during which guest execution is completely stalled.

VMX

Virtual Machine eXtensions

VPID

New support for software control of *TLB* (VPID improves *TLB* performance with small *VMM* development effort).

VT-d

Virtualization Technology for Directed I/O

Like *IOMMU* for Intel* (https://software.intel.com/en-us/articles/intel-virtualization-technology-for-directed-io-vt-d-enhancing-intel-platforms-for-efficient-virtualization-of-io-devices)↗.

vTPM

Component to establish end-to-end integrity for guests via Trusted Computing.

Glossary

General

Create Virtual Machine Wizard

Virtual Machine Manager provides a graphical interface to guide you through the steps to create virtual machines. It can also be run in text mode by entering **`virt-install`** at a command prompt in the host environment.

hardware-assisted

Intel* and AMD* provide virtualization hardware-assisted technology. This reduces the frequency of VM IN/OUT (fewer VM traps), because software is a major source of overhead, and increases the efficiency (the execution is done by the hardware). Moreover, this reduces the memory footprint, provides better resource control, and allows secure assignment of specific I/O devices.

Host Environment

The desktop or command line environment that allows interaction with the host computer's environment. It provides a command line environment and can also include a graphical desktop, such as GNOME or IceWM. The host environment runs as a special type of virtual machine that has privileges to control and manage other virtual machines.

Hypervisor

The software that coordinates the low-level interaction between virtual machines and the underlying physical computer hardware.

Paravirtualized Frame Buffer

The video output device that drives a video display from a memory buffer containing a complete frame of data for virtual machine displays running in paravirtual mode.

VHS

Virtualization Host Server

The physical computer running a SUSE virtualization platform software. The virtualization environment consists of the hypervisor, the host environment, virtual machines and associated tools, commands and configuration files. Other commonly used terms include host, Host Computer, Host Machine (HM), Virtual Server (VS), Virtual Machine Host (VMH), and VM Host Server (VHS).

VirtFS

VirtFS is a new paravirtualized file system interface designed for improving pass-through technologies in the KVM environment. It is based on the VirtIO framework.

Virtual Machine

A virtualized PC environment (VM) capable of hosting a guest operating system and associated applications. Could be also called a VM Guest.

Virtual Machine Manager

A software program that provides a graphical user interface for creating and managing virtual machines.

Virtualized

A guest operating system or application running on a virtual machine.

CPU

CPU capping

Virtual CPU capping allows you to set vCPU capacity to 1–100 percent of the physical CPU capacity.

CPU hotplugging

CPU hotplugging is used to describe the functions of replacing/adding/removing a CPU without shutting down the system.

CPU over-commitment

Virtual CPU over-commitment is the ability to assign more virtual CPUs to VMs than the actual number of physical CPUs present in the physical system. This procedure does not increase the overall performance of the system, but may be useful for testing purposes.

CPU pinning

Processor affinity, or CPU pinning enables the binding and unbinding of a process or a thread to a central processing unit (CPU) or a range of CPUs.

Network

Bridged Networking

A type of network connection that lets a virtual machine be identified on an external network as a unique identity that is separate from and unrelated to its host computer.

Empty Bridge

A type of network bridge that has no physical network device or virtual network device provided by the host. This lets virtual machines communicate with other virtual machines on the same host but not with the host or on an external network.

External Network

The network outside a host's internal network environment.

Internal Network

A type of network configuration that restricts virtual machines to their host environment.

Local Bridge

A type of network bridge that has a virtual network device but no physical network device provided by the host. This lets virtual machines communicate with the host and other virtual machines on the host. Virtual machines can communicate on an external network through the host.

Network Address Translation (NAT)

A type of network connection that lets a virtual machine use the IP address and MAC address of the host.

No Host Bridge

A type of network bridge that has a physical network device but no virtual network device provided by the host. This lets virtual machines communicate on an external network but not with the host. This lets you separate virtual machine network communications from the host environment.

Traditional Bridge

A type of network bridge that has both a physical network device and a virtual network device provided by the host.

Storage

AHCI

The Advanced Host Controller Interface (AHCI) is a technical standard defined by Intel* that specifies the operation of Serial ATA (SATA) host bus adapters in a non-implementation-specific manner.

Block Device

Data storage devices, such as CD-ROM drives or disk drives, that move data in the form of blocks. Partitions and volumes are also considered block devices.

File-Backed Virtual Disk

A virtual disk based on a file, also called a disk image file.

Raw Disk

A method of accessing data on a disk at the individual byte level instead of through its file system.

Sparse image file

A disk image file that does not reserve its entire amount of disk space but expands as data is written to it.

xvda

The drive designation given to the first virtual disk on a paravirtual machine.