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Subject: GUIs from a VPS

Posted by [dowdle](#) on Mon, 20 Aug 2007 18:58:24 GMT

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On the #openvz IRC channel this weekend someone was talking about NoMachine's NX product... and I know you had mentioned it... so I gave it a try.

After playing with it for a while, I think it works quite well. It is RDP-based (or something very similar) so it uses a lot less bandwidth than VNC and is much snappier than VNC... AND it runs over SSH so it is encrypted and requires no additional firewall ports to be open. I know I'm not telling you anything you don't already know... but this is new to me.

I ended up installing freenx (in CentOS Extras repo as well as a stock package in Fedora [which I run on my desktops]) on the server and the proprietary but free (as in beer) NX client for Linux. Worked rather well.

The only problem I had was I nuked a perfectly good CentOS 5 VPS when I tried adding the basic xfce environment... because the package dependencies included udev and hal... and it ended up removing the vzdev package... making my VPS basically useless after that. On a CentOS 4 based VPS I had much better luck and got a minimal twm setup with xscreensaver without nuking vzdev. I was able to connect to the remote machine and get a fairly usable (speed wise) desktop.

After reading your comments and playing with it a little bit... I can imagine there indeed being a niche for running a remote desktop. The challenge will be to tweak the OpenVZ packaging stuff so one is able to install a usable set of GUI applications without breaking the VPS... which currently doesn't seem doable with CentOS... but perhaps other OS Templates? It would be nice if the vzdev package could say that it is a replacement for udev and hal (as well as any other packages that might break things) so that applications that say they depend on udev (etc) will install happily with vzdev. Something to work on I guess.

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