
Subject: OpenVZ with webmin

Posted by [rollinw](#) on Sat, 29 Jul 2006 18:22:30 GMT

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I have written an email message to the creator of webmin and the contributor who provided the OpenVZ module. Perhaps someone in this forum group has OpenVZ insights or ideas that might help make webmin a better fit for OpenVZ.

"I have installed webmin on a virtual Suse processor under OpenVZ. The concept is great, and I congratulate you on leading the way in providing a centralized interface for controlling what I call a "server farm". After installing the webmin RPM, I also installed the OpenVZ module contributed by "NH". The comments that follow are not intended as criticisms but as suggestive of the way your combined product might be improved.

When the OpenVZ configuration form came up, I saw that it expected things the path to vzyum, to /usr/sbin/vzctl, etc. Then it dawned on me that this module has to be installed on the OpenVZ hardware node to make it work. This may not seem like a big deal to non-OpenVZ people, but in fact it is. I don't want to get into copyright problems, so let me paraphrase the Hardware Node Availability Considerations section of the OpenVZ User's Guide, Chapter 2:

- * The hardware node (HN) plays a key role in providing resources for all the virtual environments. If the HN goes down, they all go down.
- * The HN can benefit from RAID, especially hardware RAID, to enhance total system reliability.
- * Wherever possible, service applications should run on a Virtual Environment (VE) rather than on the HN.
- * User accounts should be created on the VE's, and not on the HN.

In summary, the two major considerations for keeping the HN "lean and mean" are enhanced reliability/availability and total system security.

My reactions to this expression of OpenVZ philosophy are:

- * I want my DNS to run in a VE
- * I want my Samba server to run in a VE
- * I want my NTP (time sync) to run in a VE
- * I want all my Apache-based modules to run in a VE
- * (in general) I want to dedicate a VE to perform admin tasks, including all (as much as possible) system support functions

For some modules this is not a problem. For any service that requires access to hardware or software under direct control of the HN, the current implementation of webmin has some issues.

Webmin provides an HTTP control for Apache modules that implement its modules. AFIAK, there are no webmin clients, and webmin services run on the same host where webmin resides.

Let me suggest an expanded webmin concept in which certain services could have client software on other OpenVZ nodes, including the HN. The down side is the possibility of introducing security vulnerabilities in the form of paths between nodes. On the positive side, of course, webmin could

live on any node and appropriate client software on other nodes could cause the services to be performed there.

Your CGI scripts seem to be pretty much written in Perl. This same approach could be used for the client side implementations. You may have a good idea about how to go about this augmentation of the webmin concept. I might be able to help, if you presented a design concept. Although I used OpenVZ as an example of a needed cross-node implementation, I think there are also others (e.g., system backup, log rotation, etc.) that could benefit from the expanded approach."

Thanks for your interest.
rollinw