Subject: Understanding OpenVZ Linux
Posted by tedpenner on Mon, 13 Oct 2008 20:34:25 GMT
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In an attempt to understand what I am doing before diving into the Linux world of Virtualization I asked the message below which elicited an immediate and thoughtful response from a fellow member of Experts Exchange. I would like to know how his reply stacks up and what specific advice you guys would have from the standpoint of OpenVZ. Which kernal & distributions should I start with?

Here is the question and answer.

QUESTION:
We have folks popping up all over the organization I work for using some odd flavor of UNIX and Linux. I understand Linux is free and have just found a chart here http://www.levenez.com/unix/history.html#12 which outlines each version of UNIX. I see that the latest free version is Linux v2.6.27 this year.

I wish to prove the concept that I can manage all these stand-alone pop-ups by first conforming to a single standard or two and then, virtualizing that or those standards. I am NOT new the the world of virtualization when it comes to Windows. I have been involved with VMWare products for years and have recently become sold on the line of products from Parallels. This company (formerly swsoft) is the first to have resolved the issue of "OS redundancy". They have done this for Windows with a commercial product they developed called Virtuozzo Containers for Windows, but I understand they started with Linux in a free product called OpenVZ which they still support. My plan is to use OpenVZ to support our end-user Linux environment.

I am not clear on where to start and am brand new to the Unix and Linux world. I have taken two classes with HP on the HP-UX system and that is the extent of my knowledge thus far. So in going to download this latest Linux v2.6.27, I ran into serious trouble understanding the basic terminology. Apparently Linux v2.6.27 is just the kernal on which the "other stuff" (see my problem here) is built.

Can someone fill me in on the basics of how this new world fits together? Also, any specific suggestions on which downloads to start with would be helpful as well.

ANSWER:
The term Linux is commonly misunderstood to mean the entire operating system that people install on their computer, when as you've rightly discovered, it refers to the kernel and essential core components.

The actual Linux OS you install is called a distribution. There are many, many Linux distributions which is made up of the Linux core, then bundled with all the other stuff that makes it usable, eg: windows system, admin tools, etc etc.

To get an idea of the various distros, have a look at http://distrowatch.com/

Some of the most common/popular Linux distributions are:

Ubuntu
Redhat/Fedora
SuSe