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[Xen-devel] [ANNOUNCE] Xen high-performance x86 virtualization

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From: Ian P. <ian...@cl...> - 2003-10-02 09:17:24

We are pleased to announce the first stable release of the Xen virtual machine monitor for x86, and port of Linux 2.4.22 as a guest OS.

Xen lets you run multiple operating system images at the same time on the same PC hardware, with unprecedented levels of performance and resource isolation. Even under the most demanding workloads the performance overhead is just a few percent: considerably less than alternatives such as VMware Workstation and User Mode Linux. This makes Xen ideal for use in providing secure virtual hosting, or even just for running multiple OSes on a desktop machine.

Xen requires guest operating systems to be ported to run over it. Crucially, only the kernel needs to be ported, and all user-level application binaries and libraries can run unmodified. We have a fully functional port of Linux 2.4.22 running over Xen, and regularly use it for running demanding applications like Apache, PostgreSQL and Mozilla. Any Linux distribution should run unmodified over the ported kernel. With assistance from Microsoft Research, we have a port of Windows XP to Xen nearly complete, and are planning a FreeBSD 4.8 port in the near future.

Xen is brought to you by the University of Cambridge Computer Laboratory Systems Research Group. Visit the project homepage to find out more, and download the project source code or the XenDemoCD, a bootable 'live iso' image that enables you to play with Xen/Linux 2.4 without needing to install it on your hard drive. The CD also contains full source code, build tools, and benchmarks. Our SOSP paper gives an overview of the design of Xen, and evaluates the performance against other virtualization techniques.

Work on Xen is supported by UK EPSRC grant GR/S01894, Intel Research Cambridge, and Microsoft Research Cambridge via an Embedded XP IFP award.

Home page : <http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/netos/xen>

SOSP paper : <http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/netos/papers/2003-xensosp.pdf>

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