

Hyper-V Made Available

News

- By [Keith Ward](#)
- June 26, 2008

Microsoft's first major push into the virtualization space officially kicks off today, as Hyper-V has been released to manufacturing (RTM).

As of noon ET, Hyper-V will be available for download from the [Microsoft Download Center](#), according to Arun Jayendran, a senior product manager for Windows Server marketing. It will be available through Windows Upgrade on July 8.

The unexpected announcement is in keeping with [recent](#) Hyper-V development; ever since late last year, Microsoft has been ahead of its scheduled timetable for Hyper-V availability. When Windows Server 2008 hit commercial availability in February, Microsoft officials predicted that the Hyper-V gold (or final) code was expected in about 180 days (it originally shipped with a beta version). That would have put delivery of the hypervisor in the August timeframe.

Despite the early release, Jayendran said Hyper-V is ready to go, and has been thoroughly vetted. There have been "more than 1.5 million downloads of the Hyper-V beta. We had more than 140 customers in the TAP [Technology Adoption Program]." He also pointed out that three of Microsoft's most heavily-traveled Websites -- Microsoft.com, MSDN.com, and Technet.com, with a combined 42 million page views per day-- have been running on Hyper-V for months.

"We've talked to lot of customers deploying the beta version of this product. Customers are saying it's easy to use, has good performance, and stability and reliability are very good," Jayendran added.

Hyper-V is a bare-metal hypervisor, meaning it sits directly on hardware and controls the creation and operation of virtual machines (VMs). It's intended to compete directly with ESX, the flagship hypervisor of industry leader VMware. Microsoft hopes to make inroads in the market by offering Hyper-V as part of Windows 2008; no additional licenses are needed. ESX, conversely, carries a hefty pricetag. VMware, however, owns a huge share of the market -- as much as 80 percent or more, according to most estimates -- putting Microsoft in the unfamiliar role of underdog, trying to grab market share from the dominant player in the industry.

Microsoft's other hypervisor, Virtual Server 2005, is a Type II, or hosted, hypervisor. It sits on top of an operating system, creating additional overhead, making it a poor choice in most cases for enterprise environments. Microsoft also has a PC virtualization product, Virtual PC, which allows users to run other Microsoft OSes within an OS like Windows XP or Windows Vista.

Microsoft will also offer a standalone version of Hyper-V, independent of Windows 2008. Called "Hyper-V Server", it will retail for \$28, with availability in late 2008, according to Jayendran.

The other key piece of Microsoft's virtualization strategy, System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2008, is slated for release in the early fourth quarter of this year, according to Microsoft. The last [beta](#) for VMM 2008 came out in April. VMM 2008 is Microsoft's enterprise-level management product for virtual environments. One way it distinguishes itself from VMware's management product,

VirtualCenter, is that it can manage physical as well as virtual machines. In fact, VMM 2008 can manage VMware's own ESX servers.

Hyper-V slides into an increasingly crowded marketplace. Along with ESX, there are a number of vendors, with most offerings built around the Xen open source hypervisor. Chief among those are Citrix, which offers the commercial XenServer; Sun; Virtual Iron; Novell, which has a close partnership and technology interoperability agreements with Microsoft; Red Hat; Oracle and others.