Virtualized (OVA) Installation Model

IMM eSign

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Overview

This document is intended to give you an overview of the new software installation model from IMM and assist you in making appropriate choices in how to use this new installation process.

Background

What is OVA?

OVA files are part of the "Open Virtualization Machine Format", which is an open standard supported by all major system virtualization vendors, most importantly VMware and Microsoft. They created the standard to help ensure portability and interoperability of the virtualization systems.

Read more:

- Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Virtualization_Format
- DMTF http://www.dmtf.org/standards/ovf

Why is Virtualization Valuable?

Server virtualization is a very important topic to all data center operators. Over the past decade, the footprint and impact of massed server infrastructures has been significantly decreased, largely due to the ability to virtualize operating systems and have them share resources in a much more efficient manner. This substantially decreased the electrical load and space requirements of datacenters, including a massive decrease in cooling load.

Where physical servers (space, hardware cost, cooling, electricity) used to be required, a virtual server that fits in the same space and impacts the same footprint serves multiple requirements, some of them performing many tasks. The reality is that most of our physical servers were not using even a fraction of the capacity, but still took up space and were not efficient in how they scaled down to save energy. Virtualization offers a much higher capacity for sharing that work. Even in cases where a server OS instance is not heavily loaded, the Virtualization layer manages that and scales resources (RAM and CPU) up to those machines as they need it and then down as they don't. The effect is a much higher capability of overall allocation and a large drop in the infrastructure required to run it.

Using Virtualization for Installation

Going forward, IMM is utilizing virtualization to streamline and simplify our software installation process. This has been selected for the ease and benefits it offers our clients and our implementation team, as well as the environmental and energy savings benefits offered by the virtualized model.

What are the Benefits of Virtualized Installation?

To implement a virtualized installation model, we have leveraged downloadable servers to create pseudo-appliance machines to save you time, effort and expense. Here's an overview of the benefits:

Installation

- Much faster and simpler installation
  - No customer preparation time (OS, Patching, Prerequisites, etc.)
  - Simple process for downloading and importing the virtualized IMM server
  - Comes pre-tested for all basic (not customer-specific) functions
- Fewer site specific / environment induced issues
  - All basic installation work is done in our labs, avoiding many historical installation issues
- High level of standardization streamlines both implementation and support, reducing both cost and possible member-facing impacts.
- The cloning process is simpler, cleaner and much faster.
- The production and test images are mirror copies, ensuring that all environments behave the same way.
  - Cloning also allows for easy Disaster Recovery Site set-up and reconstruction
- Provides for a more self-service implementation environment.

Upgrades

- Reduced after-hours upgrade requirements
  - All upgrades can be performed within business hours
  - Minimize billable efforts
- Less risk of member or front end staff-facing impacts
- Better and faster availability for upgrades (less IMM and FI resources required allow more bandwidth for both parties)

Support

- If any issues are experienced, only one IMM solution is impacted, reducing possible member service impacts.
- Highly standardized instances
  - Fewer chances of odd issues
  - Uniformity allows quicker, more efficient support of issues that may arise

Summary

We are hopeful that you will understand and appreciate the value of this new installation model, and will embrace this going forward. To utilize the new OVA/Virtualized installation process, you do not have to do anything special as it will be our default model for installations and upgrades going forward. This is another value and benefit IMM continues to provide under our Annual Maintenance program.

If you elect to not utilize or participate in the OVA/Virtualized installation model, then you will have options available. But since this is our new model provided under our Annual Maintenance program, these other options will be offered as additional priced services.

Custom Installation vs Virtualized (OVA) Installation

Virtualized installation is offered at not charge under the IMM Annual Maintenance Program.
If you opt not to utilize the Virtualized OVA distribution, let your sales person know, and they will provide you with a work order for a custom installation project. We'll give you an allowance for the planned (included) time the OVA would have taken to implement in your environment. All subsequent time required beyond this allowance to install, test and troubleshoot your custom installation is billed according to our published professional services rates.

Virtualized installations are faster.
Time is impacted in several ways for custom installs. The actual time required to complete the job is significantly longer and must be scheduled within the availability of our specific upgrades and installation services team. Leveraging the Virtualized (OVA) installation model will expedite your installation process.

Realistic time expectations differ depending on the current workload and schedule, but adding 4-6 weeks to the installation schedule is a reasonable best-guess for planning. Exact time impact will be determined at the time you submit your custom installation request.

Virtualized installations can be cloned.
With custom installs, cloning is impossible. This is a major component to give up, and you need to plan for it. All servers will have to be manually installed and those hours of labor are all included in the billable time. However, that is only the "cost". The biggest impact is not being able to spin off a new server on demand. For example, if you need to quickly test patches but can't afford to have the Test or Training systems offline, the OVA lets you clone a server, test it, then destroy it, all in a simple, easy process that you can control. For custom installs, this will all be billable professional service work, requiring not only cost but significant time to complete.

Upgrades are not impacted by the Virtualized Installation Model.
With virtualized installations, you get a new copy of the server when you get a new version of your IMM software product. That allows you to do full testing in your staging/test environment and avoid any impact to your production environment, and all at your pace and schedule. Custom installations (upgrades) have immediate impacts on the live environment. With custom work, you only have from the time of the install until the start of the business day to resolve any issues.

For custom installs, all upgrade work will be performed after-hours, which is billable for all required time to complete the task. It also requires a longer lead time to get scheduled. When installation staff are required to work after regular business hours, the first available time slot must be beyond their currently scheduled work. This is necessary because we must take them off their normal work schedule to accommodate the after-hours work.

Ordering a Custom Install

If you have decided that using the downloadable virtualized model is not for you, please let your project manager know. They will proceed to have a work order sent to you for the custom installation work. Once the work order has been signed and returned, your upgrade or installation will then be scheduled.