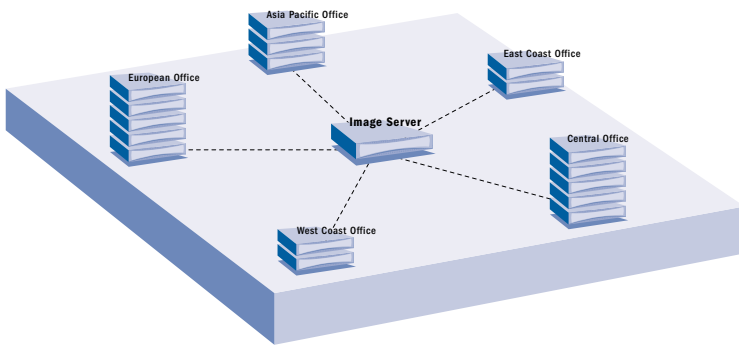# VA Linux
SystemImager

Features

- Open Source software
- Installs to systems in parallel
- Auto-install clients can boot from:
  - Hard drive
  - CD-ROM drive
  - Floppy disk
  - Network
- Partitions and formats disks
- Works with disks of different sizes
- Images are based on working systems
- Images are stored as a directory of files
- Multiple images can be maintained on the image server
- Different clients can install different images at the same time
- Clients can be upgraded incrementally by synchronizing them to an updated image
- Only differences are replicated, so client upgrades are very fast
- Software and content distribution are predictable and reliable, because they're based on images taken from working systems
- An auto-install of any running Linux machine can be initiated remotely, allowing re-installation of servers at remote locations without onsite personnel

Deploying or updating large numbers of Linux servers in geographically dispersed locations can be a challenging task. VA SystemImager software from VA Linux Systems simplifies and streamlines this process. For example, over Fast Ethernet, a full 1.2-gigabyte auto-install can take as little as three minutes. And because SystemImager is Open Source software, you can modify it to suit your needs, such as adding support for new or special client hardware.

Personnel savings

SystemImager can save your organization vast amounts of install time, which translates to faster deployments and lower personnel costs. Assuming a conservative four hours per machine, it would take 400 person-hours to install and configure Linux and your applications on 100 machines by hand. With SystemImager, the same install can be done in eight person-hours.

Safe production rollouts

SystemImager can help ensure successful rollouts of software changes to your production systems. Start by creating images of both your existing and updated systems. When you're ready to distribute the update to your production systems, simply synchronize them to the new image. If the modifications cause any problems, synchronize the systems back to the stable image until the update can be revised.

Security fixes

If you suspect that one of your servers has had a security breach, use SystemImager to have the server auto-install itself from scratch, or synchronize it to the appropriate image. This brings it back to a known (uncompromised) state in minutes.

File-based images

Other automated installation tools use disk-based images—an approach that can require full re-installs to update a single file. By contrast, SystemImager's file-based images allow for incremental updates to installed machines. They also make it easy to install and distribute non-packaged applications, including custom and in-house applications.

New custom loads

With upcoming versions of VA SystemImager, you will be able to order servers from VA Linux with the SystemImager client pre-installed. When the servers arrive on site, they will auto-install themselves with the latest custom load from your image server.
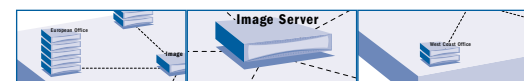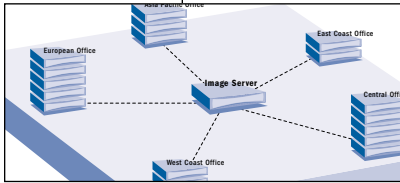
Ordering information

VA SystemImager is Open Source software and can be downloaded from systemimager.sourceforge.net. Implementation and support of VA SystemImager is available from VA Linux Professional Services at www.valinux.com/services.

For More Information

For the latest information on the full line of VA Linux products, visit www.valinux.com or call us at 1-877-VALINUX.

Customer Comments

NetLedger

"VA SystemImager has run beautifully and is a great example of how VA Linux develops and uses Open Source software to solve its customers' problems quickly and effectively," says Dave Durkee, CIO of NetLedger. "VA Linux's outstanding professional services and expertise enable it to deliver flexible solutions customized for our most demanding Internet infrastructure needs. Trying to deploy this number of systems in a more traditional manner could have taken 2000 hours; with VA SystemImager and VA Linux Professional Services, it took less than a week."

Bristol-Myers Squibb

"The VA SystemImager tools have significantly reduced the amount of energy we need to spend administering our Linux cluster," said Nathan O. Siemers, senior research investigator in Applied Genomics at Bristol-Myers Squibb. "The ability to modify the configuration of our cluster nodes on the fly and distribute those changes easily has turned what could have been a full-time administration problem into a manageable situation."

ValueWeb

"VA SystemImager has given us a quick, convenient way to image, test and deploy servers for our customers on an as-needed basis," said Kaushik Chokshi, vice president of engineering at ValueWeb. "Because VA SystemImager is Open Source, we were able to make our own customizations to the tool that will be integrated into the next release of the software. At ValueWeb, our goal has always been to leverage our facilities-based network infrastructure and industry alliances to help our customers spend less and retain more revenue. VA Linux is providing us with solutions that meet our needs as we scale quickly."

Code Contributors

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VA LINUX
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