Tech Resource Zone

Virtual Licensing
Key to Apps in the Cloud

I t's no secret that many organizations are going virtual. Whether they are using VMWare or Xen to run test Linux servers under their desk or a production system in the cloud, virtualization is fast becoming the go-to technology for providing cost-effective disaster recovery, load balancing, and reliable service.

This past Spring, BASIS International Ltd. made the leap into the clouds – moving all production servers, license servers, build servers, Bugzilla servers, and even some test servers to Amazon's Elastic Compute Cloud (Amazon EC2). While planning the move to the cloud, our engineers put the finishing touches on a licensing feature to make it easier for BASIS customers to make the same leap: Virtual Licensing.

Virtualization is software that allows a piece of hardware to run multiple operating system images at once. The 'host system' hardware is detached and virtualized for each of the guest operating systems. While BBj® and (V)PRO/5 (Visual PRO/5® or PRO/5®) are well suited to such an environment, hardware virtualization has traditionally been a problem for the BASIS License Manager (BLM). To prevent software theft, every BASIS license is generated with a composite hostid based upon the hardware profile of the system running the BLM. When a virtual machine reboots, the guest operating system may come up with a different hardware profile than it had before, triggering 'nag' messages from the BLM. For this reason, in the days prior to version 10, BASIS recommended installing the BLM on a non-virtualized machine - one that is not susceptible to a changing hardware profile.

BASIS introduced virtual licensing in BBj and (V)PRO/5 10.0, making it possible for the BLM to work happily next to BBj or (V)PRO/5 on the guest operating system of a virtual server in the cloud or under your desk.

Here's how it works: The BLM automatically re-registers for a new license from our license database server each time the virtual BLM machine starts up with a different hostid. The BLM also automatically re-registers a license when it is within 24 hours of its expiration; once per hour for the license life until it successfully gets a new 24-hour license. **> >**

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The FAQs

Q. *What are the requirements for a virtual license?*

A. To successfully run a virtual license, you must have the following:

- BLM 10.0 available in the BBj 10.0 release or downloaded separately with (V)PRO/5 10 (the new BLM can serve virtual licenses for new and old versions of BASIS products)

- An active Software Asset Management (SAM) subscription

- Internet access for the BLM to contact the BASIS license server (port 80)

Q. *How do I purchase or upgrade to a virtual license?*

A. Here are the paths to follow:
- Existing license(s) with an active SAM subscription: Contact the BASIS Customer Service Department at 1.800.426.5543 or cust@basis.com

- New virtual license(s): Contact the BASIS Sales Department at 1.800.423.1394 or info@basis.com

Q. *How do I install and use a virtual license?*

A. The process for installing and using a virtual license is exactly the same as a regular license but with the added requirement that the server on which the BLM is running must have access to the Internet.

Summary

With virtual licensing, BASIS has removed the last obstacle to taking your complete operation to the cloud. Spend just a little time experimenting with VMWare, Xen, or cloud infrastructures such as Amazon's EC2 and be convinced of the benefits of virtualization. Then exploit this valuable resource for your cost-effective disaster recovery, load balancing, and reliable service. The sky is the limit! ■

- For more information, read the online BASIS documentation links.basis.com/001
- Check out these additional resources:
    - Amazon EC2 aws.amazon.com/ec2
    - Rackspace www.rackspace.com
    - VMWare www.vmware.com/products/server
    - Xen www.xen.org

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