white paper

Configuring and Troubleshooting VMware VMotion

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itle:	Configuring and Troubleshooting VMware VMotion
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arget Audience:	Technical - Intermediate
urrent Revision:	1.0 (June 2009)
irst Published:	June 2009
roduct(s):	VMware ESX 3.5, Virtual Center, vSphere
ID:	XD10028

Content Overview:

- Introduction to VMotion
- How VMotion works
- How to correctly configure and troubleshoot VMotion

1.0 Introduction

This white paper describes how to correctly configure and troubleshoot VMotion in VMware ESX Server 3.5 but these principles also apply to vSphere 4.0 environments.

2.0 What is VMotion

VMotion is the ability to seamlessly move a running virtual machine between two physical ESX Hosts without service interuption. It is transparent to the guest OS and applications, able to cope with failures and incurs no downtime of the virtual machine. The term '**migrating**' is used to describe the move from one Host to another however it's important to realise that only the processor and memory state are moving, the virtual hard disk files (.vmdk) do not move but remain on the same shared storage. Moving the virtual hard disk files is referred to as Storage VMotion and is a separate feature not discussed here.

3.0 How does VMotion work?

VMotion can be initialised in a number of ways including using the migration wizard within the virtual infrastructure client, programmatically using the API or by the automated Distributed Resource Scheduling (DRS) load balancing feature.

The process flow of VMotion is as follows:

- 1. VMotion is initiated.
- 2. ESX Starts pre-copying the virtual machine memory state to the destination ESX host. The pre-copy repeats until the memory changes in each copy are very small.
- The source virtual machine stops and is Quiesced. The remaining memory deltas are copied. (This process takes milliseconds).
- 4. The destination host starts the virtual machine and assumes control.



Illustration 1-1: Process Overview

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4.0 Prerequisites

The following is an outline of the key prerequisites that must be met for VMotion to work successfully. These will be described in detail in section 6.0 Troubleshooting VMotion.

4.1 VMware Enterprise License

VMotion is a licensed feature of VMware and is only available in the VI Enterprise edition.

If you are evaluating VMware then you will have access to all the enterprise features (including VMotion) for a period of 60 days.

4.2 Shared Storage

The virtual machine files must reside on shared storage that both ESX hosts can access. This can be FC or ISCSI SAN's formatted with VMFS or NFS storage.

4.3 Compatible ESX CPUs

VMotion is only available between ESX hosts within the same CPU family. A live VMotion is not possible between ESX hosts running AMD and Intel CPU's. In addition if the virtual machine is moving between all AMD or all Intel ESX hosts the CPU family must be compatible. Newer CPU's in the same processor/same family may have additional features that previous versions don't support. If a VM is running on one ESX Host and taking advantage of these features then it cannot be seamlessly moved to another Host that doesn't support it.

4.4 Identical Port Group Configuration

The Port Group name on both ESX Hosts must be identical. Likewise the port groups must also present the same IP subnet and VLAN to the virtual machine. This is because the IP addressing of a virtual machine remains the same after a VMotion. As far as the virtual

machine operating system is concerned nothing has changed.

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4.5 Gigabit Ethernet

1Gbps Ethernet or above is required to reliably VMotion virtual machines. VMotion can be attempted on slower networks for testing and development but not recommended for production networks. Whilst it's possible in theory to VMotion between 2 geographically dispersed sites using stretched VLAN's, the Hosts must still be within the same VMware Cluster and the speed and latency must be fast enough to support it.

4.6 Virtual Machine compatibility

The following virtual machine configurations will cause issues:

- Connected physical devices such as CDROM, Floppy, Serial or Parallel Port.
- Virtual CDROM or Floppy devices configured to use ISO image that aren't available to both ESX Hosts.

Troubleshooting migration compatibility error: Currently connected device uses backing which is not accessible, see **VMotion errors due to connected devices**, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/</u> <u>kb/1003787</u>.

- CPU or Memory Affinity, see CPU / Memory Affinity and VMotion, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/</u> <u>kb/1003842</u>.
- Virtual Machines connected to an internal only switch, see Enable VMotion with internal switches, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1006701</u>.
 Note: This constraint can be bypassed.

5.0 Configuring VMotion

Once the prerequisites are met, follow these steps in order to configure VMotion. This assumes a fresh installation of VMware and Virtual Center.

5.1 Add Hosts to VMware Cluster

Within vCenter in the **Hosts and Clusters** view create a **Datacenter object** and then a **Cluster Object**. Right click on the cluster, select **Add Hosts** and add 2 or more ESX Hosts.

5.2 Configure Shared Storage

- Connect your shared storage, add this to each Host and then format.
- 2. Within Virtual Center in the **Hosts & Clusters** view, select each Host and on the summary tab ensure that you can view the storage from each Host as shown.

Hots & Clusters Hots & Clusters Dimensional Production Comparison Strategy Lab	demot.atravirt.Jab YMware ESX Server, 3.5.0, 129630 Setting Stated Summay Visual Machiner Parlamance D	relignation Tasks & Events Alerna Permission Maps Perlos Tr	nance Overview
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	Vitual Nochese: 19 Witten Draded: yes Active Task: Commands	Image: State	
	Nov Virtual Machine Enter Manhemance Mode	Vil Network	

5.3 Configure Virtual Networking

VMotion requires a **VMkernel** port be created on each Host. This port group and its associated Uplink (NIC) will transfer the VMotion traffic between hosts. Each VMKernel port group will have its own IP address and must have the VMotion check box ticked as shown.

 Select a vSwitch to host the VMkernel port group (or create a new vSwitch). Click on Properties.

Hardware	Networking	
Health Status Processors	Virtual Switch: vSwitch0	Remove Properties
Memory Storage	Service Console Port Service Console vswif0 : 192.168.20.205	Physical Adapters
Storage Adapters Network Adapters	VM/cernel Port VM/kernel 192.168.20.195	.+ I

2. Select **Add** and choose a new port group of type **VMkernel**.

Connection Types
C Virtual Machine
Add a labeled a should be locally of the disorder a should be fills
Add a labeled network to handle virtual machine network tramic.
VMkernel
The VMkernel TCP/IP stack handles traffic for the following ESX server services: VMware VMotion, ISCSI,
and Nrb.
Add consist for bort management traffic
Hou support for host management of anti-

 Ensure the VMotion check box is selected by selecting Properties, and then Edit the VMkernel port group. Click Next and finish the wizard.

Connection Type	Port Group Properties		
Summary	Network Label:	VMkernel	
	VLAN ID (Optional):		
		Use this port group for VMotion	
	ID Setting		
	ID Address:	102 169 20 5	
	Scheet Masks		
	Witernal Default Cateman	235.235.25	
	meeting berout deterray.	192 , 168 , 21 , 1 Edit	
	Preview:		
	VMkernel Port	Physical Adapters	
	192.168.21.95		
		TIL	
		• I	

Best Practices:

- Provide a dedicated network / VLAN for VMotion traffic to keep the memory state secure as well as provide best performance.
- At least one dedicated physical NIC.
- Also configure a standby NIC.

6.0 Troubleshooting VMotion

VMotion issues are typically caused by:

- Misconfiguration within VMware Virtual Center
- Incompatible CPU's
- Incompatible virtual machine configurations

6.1 Troubleshooting Steps

Licensing

a. Ensure that the Virtual Infrastructure is licensed by checking the **Licensed Feature** tab within Virtual Center.

Hardware	Licensed Features		
Health Status	License Source		Edt
Processors Memory	License Server:	192.168.20.55	
Storage	ESX Server Edition		Edt
Networking	ESX Server Standard	Licensed for 2 CPUs	
Storage Adapters	NAS Usage		
Network Adapters	ISCSI Usage Up to 4-way virtual SMP		
Software	SAN Usage		
 Licensed Features 	Add-Ons		Edt
Time Configuration	Wilware DRS	Licensed for 2 CPUs	
DNS and Routing	VirtualCenter Agent for ESX Server	Licensed for 2 CPUs	
Virtual Machine Startup/Shutdown	VMotion	Licensed for 2 CPUs	
Virtual Machine Swapfile Location	WMware Consolidated Backup	Licensed for 2 CPUs	
Serure Drofile	VMware HA	Not Used	
Success Press Alexables			
System Resource Allocation			

Virtual Center Networking

- VMKernel Ensure a VMkernel port is created on each host and the Use this port group for VMotion is selected.
- c. **Port Group Names** Ensure the names of the port groups are exactly identical
- d. VLAN and IP networks Ensure each Host is connected to the same VLAN / network
- e. VM connected to an Internal only vSwitch – VM's connected to an internal only vSwitch (that is one with no assigned physical uplink) will fail a VMotion. This can be enabled, see Enable VMotion with internal switches, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1006701</u>.

Shared Datastore not accessible to both ESX Hosts

f. Check that each Host can access the datastore which holds the virtual machine files, see Section
 5.2 Configure Shared Storage.

CPU compatibility

- g. Using one of the following tools to check CPU compatibility:
 - VMware CPU Host Info by Run-Virtual, <u>http://</u> www.run-virtual.com/files/cpuinfo_201.zip
 - CPU-Z by Franck Delattre at CPUID, <u>http://</u> www.cpuid.com/cpuz.php

 h. Enable Enhanced VMotion Compatibility – EVC. Only supported in Virtual Center 2.5 U2 and above.
 Right click on the VMware Cluster, select Edit Settings, select VMware EVC and Enable for AMD or Intel Hosts. This will disable the necessary CPU features that are not common throughout all ESX Hosts in the cluster.

Note: To enable VMware EVC:

- All VM's in the cluster must be powered off.
- CPU's must support 'Flex migration' (Intel) or AMD-V Extended Migration (AMD).
- The VT and 'No execute bit' must be enabled in the BIOS of the ESX Hosts.

Right-click on the cluster object within virtual center and select **Edit Settings**.

VMware EVC Swapfile Location	Enhanced VMotion Com compatibility. Once ena the cluster may be add	patibility (EVC) configures a cluster and its hosts to maximize VMotion bled, EVC will ensure that only hosts that are compatible with those in ed to the cluster.
	C Disable EVC	C Enable EVC for Intel® Hosts
	Details Applies baseline feature	set of Intel® Core™2 processors to all hosts in this EVC duster.
	"Intel® Core"*2" refer	to Merom-based products.
	Incompabile Hosts:	
	Incompatible Hosts: Name	Details
	Incompatible Hosts:	Detals
	Incompatible Hosts:	Detais

Virtual Machine Configuration

- i. Check the virtual machine does not have any of the following devices connected:
 - CD ROM Drive
 - Floppy Drive
 - Serial Port
 - Parallel Port
- j. **CPU Affinity** Ensure CPU affinity is not set. To check the CPU affinity:

I. Log in to the Virtual Center as an administrator

from the Virtual Infrastructure client.

- II. Right-click on the Virtual Machine.
- III. Click Edit Settings.
- IV. Click the **Resources** tab.
- V. Click the Advanced CPU option.
- See CPU / Memory Affinity and VMotion, http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1003842.
- k. Check the VM is not attached to an Internal only switch, that is one with no physical network adapter.
 - See Enable VMotion with internal switches, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1006701</u>.

Miscellaneous

- Virtual Network security policies may conflict It is possible to configure different Security and Traffic shaping policies on ESX Hosts which will cause VMotion to fail. Ensure the security policies match:
 - See Troubleshooting Migration compatibility error, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1003834</u>.

Workarounds:

VMotion referes to the live migration of running virtual machines from one ESX host to another. If machines are powered off they can be moved between Hosts even without many of the VMotion requirements being met including CPU compatibility and virtual machine configuration settings. This is referred to as Cold Migration.

7.0 Summary

Once configured correctly VMotion is a reliable feature of VMware vCenter which is used in many production datacenters.

VMotion is a licensed feature only available with ESX 3.x Enterprise edition or vSphere Advanced Edition +.

7.1 Useful References and KB articles

- Diagnosing VMware VMotion failure at 10%, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1003734</u>
- Troubleshooting Migration compatibility error: Currently connected network interface uses network, which is configured for different offload or security policies, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/ kb/1003834</u>
- VMotion failure, error message: problem detected at CPUID level 0x80000001 register 'edx', <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1001131</u>
- VMotion Fails When the Virtual Machine's Parallel Port Is Set to Write to an Output File, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/2284</u>
- Troubleshooting Migration compatibility error: VMotion from source host to destination host is unsupported because of VMotion protocol differences, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1003828</u>
- VMotion Error: Destination Host Not on Same Networks as Virtual Machine You Are Trying to Migrate, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1723</u>
- Troubleshooting migration compatibility error: Unable to access the virtual machine configuration: Unable to access file, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1003795</u>

- Troubleshooting migration compatibility error: Currently connected device uses backing which is not accessible, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1003787</u>
- Troubleshooting Migration compatibility error: The VMotion interface is not configured (or is misconfigured) on the destination host, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1003827</u>
- VMware vMotion and CPU Compatibility, <u>http://</u> <u>www.vmware.com/files/pdf/vmotion_info_guide.</u> <u>pdf</u>
- 11. Troubleshooting Migration compatibility error: Virtual machine has CPU and/or memory affinities configured, preventing VMotion, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1003842</u>
- 12. VMotion times out at 10%, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/</u> kb/1002567
- 13. Troubleshooting VMotion CPU feature requirement error messages, <u>http://kb.vmware.</u> <u>com/kb/1003718</u>
- 14. Overview of Migration Compatibility Error Messages, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1003684</u>
- 15. Troubleshooting migration compatibility error: Device is a connected device with a remote backing, <u>http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1003780</u>
- 16. Enabling VMotion on internal vswitch behind bridged-mode firewalls and other network appliances, http://kb.vmware.com/kb/1006701
- 17. Configuring a Duplicate IP Address for VMotion Causes an Error, http://kb.vmware.com/kb/2224

This concludes the white paper.

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Additional References 1. Nil.

Useful Links 1. Nil. Tags

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