

“Tens of millions of pounds tied up in petabytes of wasted storage! Zombie Virtual Machines continue to be a problem” says Real-Status CTO, Stace Hipperson

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CTO of Cambridge-based company sees VM Sprawl as a major threat to business efficiency in cloud-based computing for the foreseeable future

Real-Status (<http://www.real-status.com>) CTO, Stace Hipperson, has warned that Virtual Machine (VM) administrators still need to be extra vigilant against VM sprawl as more and more users “self-provision” to set up their own virtual machines. VMs are software implementations of computers that execute programmes like physical machines, and they are the enabling technology behind cloud computing.

The ease with which VMs are created and the lack of discipline in removing them when no longer needed means VMs are needlessly using up valuable resources and generally creating ongoing performance problems. With cloud computing, end users can set up VMs on their own without the participation of IT management. The scale of this problem becomes apparent when you take into account VMware’s news in July that there are over 20 million VMs running on vSphere alone, and someone turns on a new VM every six seconds.

Hipperson comments:

“Even conservative calculations show petabytes (1 + 15 zeros) of storage are being wasted, and that costs tens of millions of pounds. Virtual machines are very cheap and easy to set up, and many are created for temporary use and not because there is an ongoing need for the business. Unfortunately these “zombie” VMs are often left to run on and on when not serving any useful purpose, and that wastes valuable resources.”

While most IT managers believe they are too busy handling maintenance, upgrades and troubleshooting to police unused virtual machines, Hipperson suggests that administrators could use automated tools to undertake systematic audits of all VMs and identify those that haven’t been used recently – a month or longer, for example. Then the owner can be queried to determine if the VM really needs to be kept.

He adds:

“Of course, there are crucial differences between server “utilisation” and actual “usage” that need to be differentiated. This would be a risky strategy if important data and documents were threatened with deletion, even if they haven’t been accessed recently, so a review policy will focus on truly wasted space.”

In addition, hierarchical storage management can be used, so important, but infrequently accessed information, can be moved to lower cost storage devices. Hipperson says tiered storage will free up the most expensive storage resources, and when combined with eliminating truly unnecessary Zombie VMs, enterprises can improve their return on investment from virtualisation.

Real-Status has developed a new method of visualising IT devices, such as virtual machines, and performance metrics about the devices on a single screen. The company uses 3D modelling and filtering techniques, which are patent-pending, so users can see all the relationships between physical, virtual and cloud-based devices even when there are thousands of them. That means IT operators can apply a filter and instantly see all the Zombie VMs, how they are distributed, and who their owners are.

You can see a video of Real-Status' HyperGlance product on www.real-status.com.

About Stace Hipperson

Stace Hipperson, Chief Technical Officer of Real-Status has over 20 years' experience in IT networking, process, sales, project management and support. At Real-Status, he is responsible for all aspects of the technology vision and IT architecture. Stace initiated the visualisation product suite, which is led by HyperGlance, and he is instrumental in guiding the product strategy for the products.

About Real-Status

Real-Status is an IT infrastructure modelling and data visualisation software company, and our flagship product is HyperGlance. HyperGlance combines IT dependency mapping and management data visualisation into one screen for thousands of physical and virtual devices and the applications they support. It complements existing IT management tools by aggregating and visualising their data.

Our target market is enterprises with virtualised and distributed computing environments. CIOs and their teams use HyperGlance to understand business impact before they take operational and planning decisions, which reduces risks, lowers costs, and improves capacity utilisation.

For more information visit www.real-status.com

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