

ClearCube Works Hand-in-Hand with VMware

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The latest version of ClearCube's Sentral management software will support VMware's ESX3 Server and Server virtualization software, as well as Vista.

ClearCube, known for technology that allows businesses to manage their server-based computing environments, is about to release an updated version of its Sentral software.

The 5.5 version of Sentral, available April 9 in a beta version, will add support for VMware's ESX Server 3 and VMware Server virtualization software, giving customers additional scalability when configuring virtualization deployments within a company.

Sentral 5.5 will also support Microsoft's Windows Vista operating system, said Tom Josefy, ClearCube Technology's director of product management.

When ClearCube, headquartered in Austin, Texas, first introduced its Sentral 5.0 software in 2006, it combined several of ClearCube's management software modules into one offering in order to make them a better fit for large enterprises and virtualized desktops.

This technology allows businesses to store essential PC components, such as the hard drive, memory and even the processors, in a centrally located blade computer. Much as with thin clients, workers are given a monitor, keyboard and mouse that are connected to a back-end system

through ClearCube's ports.

While thin clients and blade PCs have traditionally been niche technologies, some businesses have begun incorporating more of these type of PCs into the enterprise, given the better security and reduced power consumption they offer over traditional computers.

OEMs have also started to explore the thin-client and PC blade market. Hewlett-Packard, the world's top PC vendor, announced a new lineup of thin clients in January.

ClearCube is also working with OEMs to create virtualized desktop environments hosted on blades. Currently, the company is working with IBM and its Virtualized Hosted Client Infrastructure.

Now with the additional support of VMware's ESX3 API, the software is able to control functions such as power on, power off, hibernate and pause. It also allows administrators to cold-start virtual machines from a single console. Sentral 5.5 can also identify virtual machines without the need for an agent in the VMware ESX3 host operating system. This allows for additional tools, including the ability to manage physical and virtual machines together.

"If you have 150 blades within a company, the IT department might only have to run about 20 or so in the morning," Josefy said. "By later in the day, the IT department might have to start all the blades in the network. Then later, they can power the blades down again. The software allows the IT manager to set the peak time through a central console manager."

While Josefy said there is virtually no limit to how many clients can run off of a blade PC with ClearCube's software, he added that the ideal scenario is a 12-to-1 ratio.

"There really isn't a limit on the PC blade itself," Josefy said. "The only issue is memory and processor capacity."

So far, health care businesses and hospitals have been the most receptive to ClearCube's management software.

"Health care has shown the most interest and we've tried to move into this space quickly," Josefy said. "We've seen a lot of interest specifically within a hospital's administrative offices and nursing station, where there are concerns about patient privacy."

ClearCube will offer a full version of Sentral 5.5 in May.

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