VMware Releases Full Version of ACE 2 Software

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The full release is the latest version of VMware's desktop virtualization software that also looks to help manage an enterprise's PC fleet.

VMware has released the full version of its enterprise virtualization software for PCs.

Called ACE 2 (assured computing environment), the software is available in a full release to customers starting May 15. The release of ACE 2, which had been only available in beta through VMware's Web site, is the first major upgrade of the company's virtualization software for PCs since it was first introduced in 2004.

The full release of ACE 2 includes several new features the Palo Alto, Calif., company has detailed to the public in the last two months, including new desktop management capabilities and security improvements, better policy control for IT managers and support for USB 2.0 devices.

The new software also includes support for Microsoft's Windows Vista operating system, as well as a number of Linux operating systems including those from Mandriva, Red Hat, Novell and Ubuntu.

VMware, which many industry watchers consider the top producer of virtualization technology, is planning an initial public offer for later this year that will sell off 10 percent of the company. VMware itself is owned by EMC.

The IPO comes at a time when VMware's dominance of the market is being challenged by low-cost virtualization providers like Virtual Iron and XenSource that have started to offer technology based on open-source hypervisor software.

In addition to the full release, VMware unveiled the pricing for the new software. The Starter package begins at $999; the Standard package starts at $4,999; and the full Enterprise version begins at $15,999.

All three versions of the ACE 2 software include the company's Workstation 6, which was released May 9, and the ACE Option pack. The Standard and Enterprise versions also include VMware's Management Server software. In addition, the Enterprise edition includes 500 client licenses.

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