Subject: Re: IDL Virtual Machine Woes
Posted by David Fanning on Thu, 20 Nov 2008 14:49:56 GMT

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greg.addr@googlemail.com writes:

> I think your condition (2) is unfair - a lack of administrator
> privileges is *supposed* to prevent you from installing stuff, isn't
> it? But the VM only has to be installed once. That's not such a great
> price, I find.

Apparently, you are not working for a government agency with
a home directory allocation that would have thrilled you
in 1978, but seems paltry indeed in 2008. :-)

Look, I have, obviously, been explaining myself poorly lately.
I *know* how to create the ~50MB VM installations for the platforms
I am interested in. I can even package them up and stage them on
my anonymous FTP site for people to download. You do NOT have to
have administer privileges to install them. Nor do you have to register
to receive more e-mail.

But I have two MAJOR gripes about this:

(1) Why do *I* have to allocate storage space, arrange for
    downloads, and create a web page to allow people to install
    an ITTVIS Virtual Machine!? Good thing my son decided to
    buy a Macintosh when he went to college or I would *still*
    be looking for a way to create a Macintosh VM. If I was
    still working from home, I would have had no way to build
    the LINUX VM that a large percentage of my potential customers
    want to use.

(2) In live tests, with real target audiences, I have discovered
    that no matter how much time you spend writing clear instructions
    for starting the darn thing up, people cannot do it a depressingly
    large percentage of the time. (Yes, I know MAKE_RT can build the
    scripts necessary to run a *particular* save file, but surely
    I don't want to have to ship another VM each time I want my
    customer to run another save file from me. I want a way of starting
    the VM to run *any* save file. And I want to do it with having to
    instruct the user to go down into the bowels of this directory
    I just gave you and double click this particular file whose name
    is similar to dozens of similar files in the directory. You think
    I may be joking about how hard this is for some people, but I
    assure you I am not.)

I am just saying that if ITTVIS wanted us to use the Virtual Machine

to distribute IDL save files to customers (and I am pretty sure they
do not), then they would have provided a way for *my* customers to do a
non-administrative install of a Virtual Machine of a type appropriate
for whatever computer *my customer* had (and not *me*) and an easy
way for my customer to run the darn thing.

Enough said. I've moving on. Three weeks is too long to fool
around with this. And I'm not sure anyone is really using the
Virtual Machine anyway.

Cheers,

David

P.S. My original idea what the *my* customer would become *their*
customer by seeing what neat software they could run. But I am
re-thinking this entire plan. Maybe I'll write an iTool and distribute
that instead. :-)

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: http://www.dfanning.com/
Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")