

CheapVPS.co.uk KVM VPS V1 review

Review a small, UK based KVM VPS. Without expectations but with surprisingly good results.

For nearly two years, I've ran a hosted server as the base of my (very) small business hosting solutions. It is a HP DL360 G4, not a too up-to-date hardware: 2 of 72 GB HP U320 SCSI disk in RAID 1, 4 GB memory and a 64-bit Xeon 3 GHz processor. Also, I'm hosting it now for about 60€/month.

Unfortunately, after updating it from Ubuntu 8.04 to 10.04, it somehow lost some of it's performance. I've had to be quick not to generate too much downtime, and this is my reward.

Before this, I rented a VPS server from a Hungarian company. It was a Virtuozzo-based system (pretty much the same as OpenVZ), and I don't really have good experiences with both OpenVZ both the company. OpenVZ uses the very same kernel on every container, so they had tons of restrictions (no sshfs for example...) and lots of maintance time.

Nowadays I'm giving up hosting on my own hardware, basically it doesn't worth it, so I looked around a bit what changed at VPS hosting in the past years. I was searching for a small server with the following: at least 512MB RAM, XEN or KVM based, not more than 25 € / month at max, no small, starter or upcomer company and no paperwork. In Hungary, you have to sign papers for *everything*, and I do mean everything.

Also, I planned to search in Europe. I'm not intending to leave Europe so far, and I'd like my system to serve at a reasonable speed.

This was the way I've found CheapVPS.co.uk^[1]. A quick payment via Paypal, a few hours of waiting (I payed at around 10pm so it is reasonable), and I had a VPS, with self-install possibility. They provide a web-interface and a Java based VNC console, so it was just like a normal install. There was a small suprise, since I selected Ubuntu 11.04 from a list as my future system, but they only provided mountable ISO images for 10.10. No problem, it was solved after install with do-release-upgrade.

Comparison

System comparison

	wintermute	akasha
computer type	hosted physical machine	KVM VPS
CPU	Intel® Xeon™ CPU 3.00GHz	unknown
RAM	4 GB	512 MB
swap	4 GB	1 GB
operating system	Ubuntu 10.04 LTS Lucyd Lynx	Ubuntu 11.04 Natty Narwhal
kernel	2.6.35-020635rc1-generic	2.6.38-11-server

Network speed

Network speed was tested with iperf, where the target was runing with `iperf -s -p xxxx` and the source started with `iperf -c <hostname> -p xxxx`

source / target	wintermute	akasha
wintermute	-	25.6 Mbits/sec
akasha	48.4 Mbits/sec	-
my machine	1.54 Mbits/sec	1.53 Mbits/sec

Disk speed

Test mechanish: `dd if=/dev/zero of=/testfile bs=1M count=1024` four times, average calculated.

wintermute	akasha
~82 MB/s	~148 MB/s

Conclusions

I have to say, I was pretty surprised by the performance of the VPS. The last time I tried installing a KVM based system it bleed on disk speed: Xen overdone it by about 300%. Also, there's no perceptible difference in connection speed, nor in web page serving, nor in SSH based file transfer. The CPU is significantly more powerful on the VPS than on the 6 year old architecture. Until now, I did not experienced any glitches, errors or mistakes in the VPS, but I keep an eye on the Munin graphs of the new machine. The only thing I can tell is that cheapvps.co.uk^[^2] does worth it in every way.

Links

1. <http://cheapvps.co.uk>
2. <http://cheapvps.co.uk/>

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