Efficient, Scalable, and Secure Desktop Virtualization

McAfee and Citrix collaborate to spur wider adoption of VDI

Until today, the absence of scalable, easily managed security software for virtual endpoints has been a concern for many enterprises adopting desktop virtualization. To address that challenge, McAfee and Citrix, market leaders in security and virtualization, are collaborating to deliver a suite of products, tools, and technologies to unlock the power of desktop virtualization for all enterprises.

Virtualization of desktops, applications, and servers promises tremendous advantages for enterprise IT organizations: efficiency, consolidation, manageability, security, and reduced power consumption. Yet desktop virtualization, including virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI), has rolled out more slowly than expected.

The security challenge for virtual desktops
As the desktop transforms, security needs to be specifically designed for these new systems, rather than added only as an afterthought. In standard VDI deployments, traditional endpoint security software is installed within each guest. Unfortunately, this leads to endpoint security activities, such as scheduled scans, on-access scans of email attachments, and signature and product updates that happen simultaneously. These concurrent operations accumulate and can max out the CPU and memory, bog down the network, and create I/O bottlenecks.

The McAfee and Citrix partnership
McAfee and Citrix formed a strategic partnership to make virtual desktop security simpler and more scalable for large enterprise deployments. The partnership is the direct result of growing customer demand for integrated security management in large enterprise deployments of desktop virtualization. The combination enables granular endpoint security policies for each virtual desktop, while overcoming scalability, performance, and complexity challenges that arise from virtualization.

This strategic relationship will drive initiatives to:

• Allow Citrix XenDesktop customers to extend security management of desktops to virtual environments
• Develop hypervisor-native detection capabilities into Citrix XenClient and Citrix XenServer. These industry-first capabilities for hypervisor-native detection will also be contributed to Xen.org, together with an open security API.
• Enable the broad Xen ecosystem, including Xen-based clouds, to offer endpoint security services as a native property of virtual infrastructure

Optimizing security for virtual environments
The McAfee® Management for Optimized Virtual Environments (MOVE) platform, supporting Citrix XenDesktop, provides security management tailored to virtualized environments. Rather than running an endpoint security agent in each virtual machine (VM), MOVE Anti-virus (AV) delivers a virtual appliance that consolidates scanning processes and signature updates outside of the VMs, efficiently protecting all virtualized desktops.
The results are groundbreaking. In McAfee and Citrix tests, implementing MOVE AV allows servers to run three times the number of virtual machines, compared to traditional endpoint security implemented inside individual virtual machines. This higher VM density lowers the per-desktop cost of desktop virtualization and allows VDI implementations to achieve the operational payoff enterprises expect. With McAfee and Citrix, security scales.

One security management experience across physical and virtualized environments
We have synthesized the industry’s most open and broadly supported security and compliance management platform, McAfee ePolicy Orchestrator® (McAfee ePO™), with the Citrix management environment, Citrix XenCenter. You can now centrally manage security policies and activities for each virtual machine, regardless of the hypervisor it uses. The intelligent scanning scheduler allows you to run scans when they are most convenient, based on hypervisor load or when desktops are not in use. Within McAfee ePO, you can view customized security dashboards and reports on each hypervisor, and roll them up as a seamless part of your overall management workflow. McAfee is also working on extending the MOVE compatibility to Citrix XenClient to ensure that multiple virtual desktops can run securely and maintain high performance on a single device.

Fostering security in the virtualization ecosystem
With McAfee and Citrix, the market leader in security joins forces with the market leader in desktop virtualization. Together, McAfee and Citrix are contributing technology to the Xen.org open source community to nurture a new wave of security offerings for the virtualized enterprise. Any endpoint security vendor will be able to integrate their security solutions into XenDesktop’s lifecycle management workflows, while simultaneously simplifying and optimizing security management.