

HOWTO: update VIOS

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Updating VIOS software

In principle, updating a VIOS server is easy. This became more complex with the coming of VIOS 2.X, and especially with VIOS 2.2.X. VIOS 1.X (now long out of official support) is based on AIX 5.3. VIOS 2.X is based on AIX 6.1. So updating to VIOS 2.X from VIOS 1.X meant you had to do a migration update of AIX 5.3 to AIX 6.1. This explains why there is a separate migration DVD to VIOS 2.1.

Originally, the VIOS updates included anything and everything that might be needed to update the VIOS from any previous level to the new level. This tended to make the updates very - VERY - large, even when only a few files were needed. Now there are VIOS service packs. This difference: migration, update_large, update_small means you need to really be sure where you are now and how to get to the "latest" level.

Update Process: fresh install or patch?

If you are still

at VIOS version 2.1.X or less you are missing features and bug fixes.

As a starting point I would recommend ordering the most recent VIOS DVD -

currently 5765-PV[ESX] - Virtual I/O Server V2.2 FP24 SP2 (5/2011) LCD8-0819-12. However, as FP24-SP3 has been recently released this might be updated soon.

If you are not working from a DVD to do a fresh install (which I prefer personally) then be sure and read carefully the README

information at the FixCentral site. You might even want to create a "dummy" VIOS partition, load it with your current VIOS level, and patch that to be sure you do not run into unexpected inconsistencies before actually updating your production VIOS.

Shared Storage Pools (SSP)

The most recent (December 2010) new feature is called Shared Storage Pools. The current release is "Phase 1", and fully supported by IBM. (Why wouldn't it be fully supported I hear you asking.)

SSP - Phase 1

Shared Storage Pools use the a new feature of AIX (CAA or Cluster Aware AIX) to create a cluster of VIOS servers over

multiple managed systems. At least, after phase 1. During phase 1 the cluster is a "cluster of 1". Phase 1 is here to permit you to become familiar with the commands (basically only two - one to define the Shared Storage Pool, and the other to allocate storage to partitions).

SSP is integrated into VIOS - it is not an optional add-on you have to pay extra for. It is there for you to help with managing lots of storage with maximum efficiency of your time and utilization of your storage systems (thin provisioning is a default activity).

Nigel Griffiths has done two movies about SSP - an Introduction to SSP and Hands-On Demonstration.

Great Stuff - and another good reason to be updating your VIOS partitions.