

# Introduction to SlackVirt

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# 1 Introduction

SlackVirt is a cloud pocket system intended to be simple, versatile and efficient. It's mented to provided a virtualization solution for Slackware hosts with minimal system modifications. The pocket idea came from the ability of create initram disks for mantaining different setups. That can fits into portable storage devices.

Therefore, a unique host machine can be booted with different initram disks with custom configuration that can bring virtual machines from external storage devices.

SlackVirt isn't a real emulator or a virtualization solution, but a virtualization platform for maintain a Slackware based virtual machine host. Which includes compatible tools to its aimed Linux distribution that can handle typical administrative operations on a set of virtualized machines that can be connected through an ethernet virtualized network.

SlackVirt do not maintain a strict package dependency list, but according to some premises it was decided which Slackware package series shall be installed as following:

- Required: a, ap, l, tcl
- Recommended: f, n, x, xap
- Optional: e, d, k, kde, kdei, xfce, y

NOTE: package series "d, k" is required if you want to build SlackVirt packages, such as: qemu and spice-gtk or compiling other softwares. The "x, xap" series are recomendad if you want to use and access the desktop instance locally.

Nonetheless SlackVirt installer tool will ask to install the required packages from one of the slackpkg templates: small or full. Therefore slackpkg is required for the installation procedure. The templates are made as following:

- small, will include the basic requirements for running SlackVirt instances, without X server.

- full, this installs all the packages from small plus the required packages for running X server.

SlackVirt includes two qemu packages, such as: qemu-server and qemu-desktop. They are compiled different according to the premises of each machine type, been a server and a desktop machine, disabling functions of the generated binary files allowing them to be independent of some host libraries. They mainly diffences are the following:

- qemu-server, no spice, no audio backend and without usb redirection.
- qemu-desktop, support for spice, compiled audio backends and support for usb redirection.

Let's suppose that a video card has to be changed in a desktop from our "computer park", there is no need to shutdown the server in the datacenter. Therefore making easy for maintaining the slackvirt host machine and running virtual instances.

There are a few sniplets that are compatible to libvirt at least those that are related to SlackVirt structure and operating mode.

SlackVirt also includes an usrlocal "disk" for the server and the desktop instances. That can be used to creates img files that can be attached to the VMs. The set of scripts helps to easily deploy/configure the instances according:

- server: dhcpd daemons, manipulate LXC's
- desktop: vncserver daemon for different users.

## 1.1 Software machines (SMs)

SlackVirt comes with two types of virtual machines precondigured

- server, no video output.
- desktop, with video output.

The default server SM is configured as following:

- CPU = Broadwell-IBRS
- RAM = 1G
- VIDEO = none
- DISK = 7 disks (3 IDE and 4 SATA)
- NETWORK = three interfaces
- USB = USB 2.0 (internal only)
- AUDIO = none

The default desktop SM, is configured as following:

- CPU = Broadwell-IBRS
- RAM = 1G
- VIDEO = vmware
- DISK = 4 disks (3 IDE and 2 SATA)
- NETWORK = three interfaces
- USB = USB 3.0 (with host bind)
- AUDIO = Intel HD Audio

## 1.2 Requirements

## 2 Installation

SlackVirt version 14.2 requires a Slackware host system running the same architecture and version, for example:

- SlackVirt 14.2 shall be installed at a Slackware 14.2 (32-bit)
- SlackVirt64 14.2 shall be installed at a Slackware64 14.2 (64-bit)

Slackvirt package series are divided as following:

- a The basic SlackVirt system packages, contains SlackVirt core.
- ap Additional application that do not require X Window System.
- d Development packages.
- l System libraries.
- n Network tools.
- qemu The QEMU program and related tools.
- x X11 basic enviroment tools.
- xap X11 applications.

```
1 # installing slackvirt
2 root@darkstar:/mnt/cdrom# ./installer/slackvirt-install
```

```
1 # using custom kernel
2 KVERSION=4.14.166 ./installer/slackvirt-install
```

After a small introduction and inform what will be done as show in Figure 1 the setup will guides the installation procedure as show in Figure 2.

Configure the startup script editing the `/etc/rc.d/rc.local`, as following:

```
1 # if [ -x /usr/local/etc/rc.d/rc.S.slackvirt ]; then
2 #   /usr/local/etc/rc.d/rc.S.slackvirt
3 # fi
```

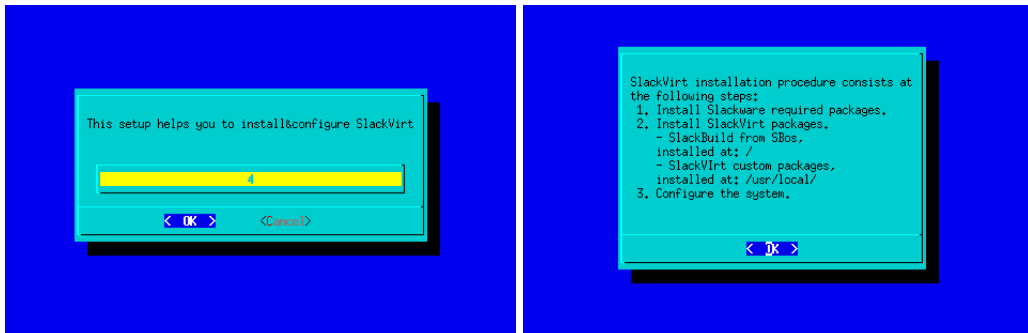


Figure 1: The setup tool

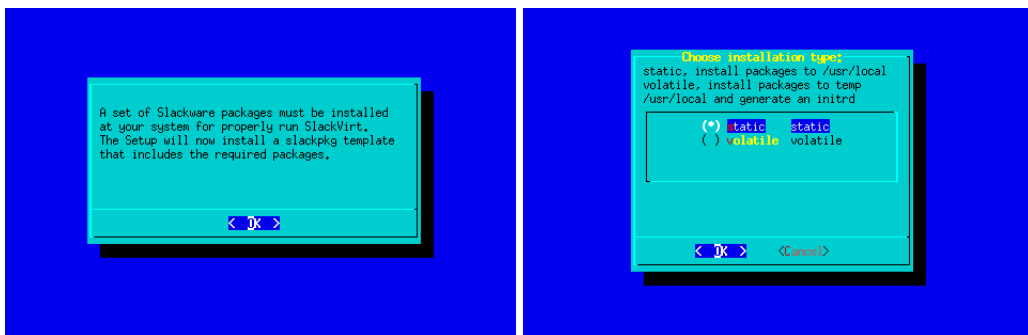


Figure 2: The setup tool

Consequently the shutdown script editing the `/etc/rc.d/rc.local_shutdown`, as following:

### 3 Setup

By default SlackVirt has configured two default computer instances, a server and a desktop. Let's presume here that SlackVirt intends to follow the Slackware way/development/educational philosophy.

Defining that SlackVirt, it's just a virtualization host and will be referenced here as a machine too, the other two computers cited will be the "server" and the "desktop", having in mind that they are virtual machines.

Therefore the machines, are delivered according to some premises, which are:

- The server, a displayless computer machine, of a data center.
- The desktop, a visual enhanced computer machine, at home.

By default both machines, have serial connections that can be used at the bootup procedure or/and as normal consoles. However the desktop presents two graphic cards for enhanced visual experiences, that are not intended to be done at server machines which used to lacks graphic hardware support. Slackvirt takes that idea for defining its default machines.

The full characteristics of the machines can be found at the flat files that holds it's configurations, which are saved at: /usr/local/etc/slackvirt. The configuration files just defines the virtual machine hardware and do not include a bootable disk with a Slackware installation on it. Thereby, it's required that users creates the disks and perform the system installation.

Let's see some notes about a practical system configuration.

Creating a qcow2 image:

```
1 # qemu-img create -f qcow2 /mnt/hd/slackware/14.2/slackware  
  -14.2.img 15G
```

Then partitioning the disk with one partition:

```
1 # fdisk /mnt/hd/slackware/14.2/slackware-14.2.img (n, enter,  
  enter, enter, enter, w)
```



Creating the file system:

```
1 # losetup -P loop0 /mnt/hd/slackware/14.2/slackware-14.2.img
2 # mkfs.ext4 /dev/loop0p1
```

Installing Slackware system:

```
1 # PKG_SERIES="A#AP#D#L#N#" \
2 #   DISK0=/var/lib/slackvirt/slackware/14.2/slackware-14.2.
   img \
3 #   slackware-gemu-vmserver.sh install \
4 #   /usr/local/etc/slackvirt/machines/slackware/slackware
   -14.2/slackware.gemu
```

## 4 Network

SlackVirt default SMs comes with three network IF cards configured attached to the host bridges: qemubr0, qemubr1 and qemubr2.

### 4.1 Configuration

The host system can be manually configured over:

```
/usr/local/etc/rc.d/rc.inet1.conf
```

To configure network address of slackvirt host, server and desktop SMs, use the tool:

```
netconfig.slackvirt
```

can be used for generating the configuration files.

By default the tool will just prompt for the host setup. However, the environment variable MACHINES is used to define extra configuration options for the SMs, either "server", "desktop" or "server desktop". This will generate the according inet1\_{server—desktop}.conf for the SMs, that can be uploaded manually or using the tool update-slackvirt-machines.sh located at /usr/local/libexec, which requires a logged-in console.

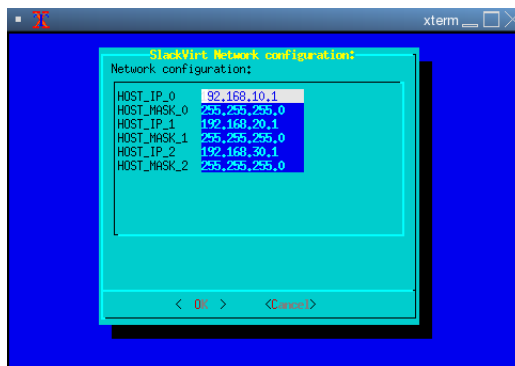


Figure 3: Network Configuration

## 4.2 Wireless

If host wireless adapter supports virtual radio interfaces it can be used to create two wireless IFs, one as an access point (AP) and other as station.

For configuring wireless network, the setup tool can be used:

```
/usr/local/var/log/setup/setup.70.local-wireless
```

It will prompt to choose one of the detected wireless network IF for been configured.

NOTE: for using wireless in AP mode it's required to install hostapd from extra packages.

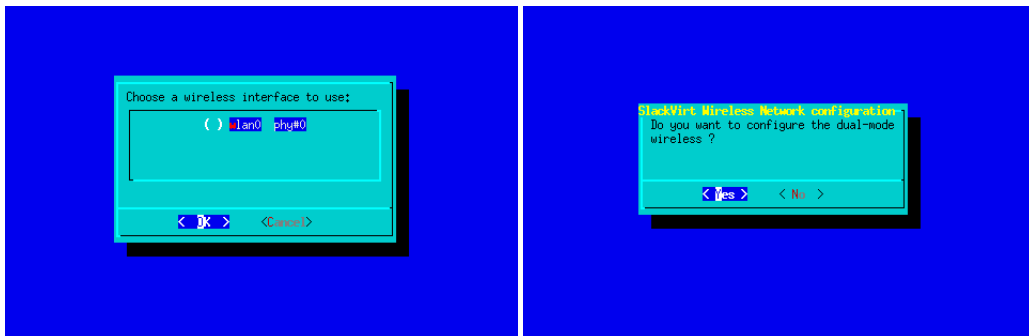


Figure 4: Wireless setup tool

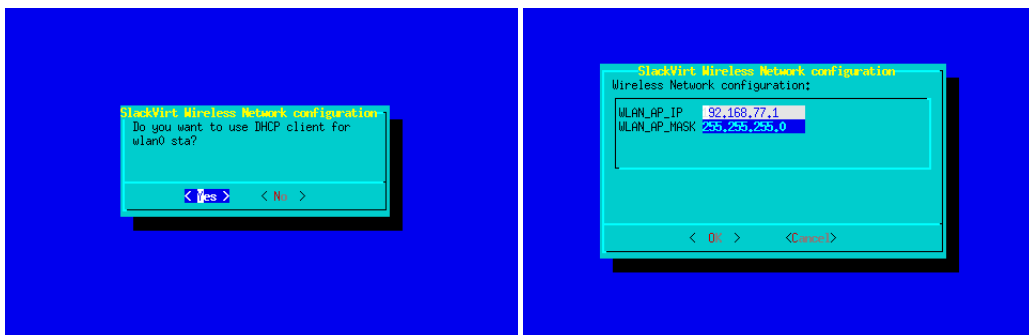


Figure 5: Wireless setup tool

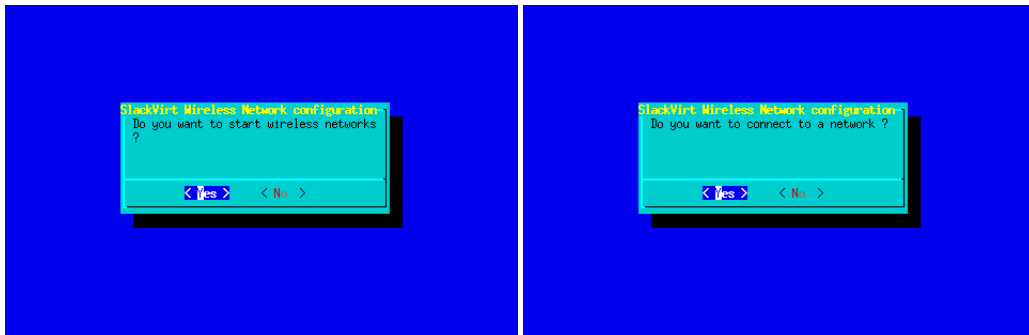


Figure 6: Wireless setup tool

## 5 Management

### 5.1 Commands

slackware-gemu-vmserver.sh command [vmfile.gemu]

Commands:

- list: list running VMs
- install "vmfile.gemu" automated slackware installation
- start "vmfile.gemu" starts a SM
- stop "vmfile.gemu" stops a SM - Send a ACPI powerdown signal, then waits specific timeout variable then send a SIGKILL to QEMU process.
- powerdown "vmfile.gemu" send ACPI powerdown signal
- wakeup "vmfile.gemu" send ACPI wakeup signal
- resume "vmfile.gemu" QEMU resume command
- pause "vmfile.gemu" QEMU pause command
- save:

- load:
- configure "vmfile.qemu" configure VM parameters
- status "vmfile.qemu" check VM status

## 5.2 tmux session

slackvirt-mon.sh

first window system process second window storage third window network server desktop

The screenshot shows a tmux session window titled "mc [mcsdn@slackstar] - Documents". The main pane displays a system boot log with various kernel messages and service startup information. The log includes details about the kernel version (4.19.0-1-amd64), the initramfs, and the systemd boot process. It shows the mounting of the root filesystem, the starting of the systemd journal, and the execution of the systemd units. The log ends with the message "Reached target Graphical interface." and "Done.".

The bottom pane shows a desktop environment with a terminal window titled "slack-4.34". The terminal displays the output of the "slackvirt-mon.sh" script, which is monitoring the system. The output shows the status of the system, including the kernel version, the initramfs, and the systemd boot process. The output also shows the status of the network, storage, and desktop services. The output ends with the message "Done.".

Figure 7: tmux session - window 0

## 6 X11

SlackVirt comes with support for x11, including customized XDM sessions and tools for managing and controlling the host system and the SMs.

### 6.1 XDM

There is two XDM sessions, configured as following:

- The first one is intended to be used for monitoring the host resources and do not start any window manager. By default will starts two windows connected to the SM (server/desktop) serial lines.

- The second one is intended to be used for accessing the SMs, including support for blackbox and fluxbox window managers. This one do not allow root login.

The second xdm session has built-in customizations, some of them are the following:

- blackbox (ctrl+return), slackvirt menu entry, bbkeys started at background.

- fluxbox (return), slackvirt menu entry, autostart xnotemon and two monitoring tools (xterms scripted, for qemu-ls and ping SMs).

- fluxbox (shift+return), slackvirt menu entry, autostart xnotemon and two monitoring tools (xterms scripted, for qemu-ls and ping SMs) and disabled a few shortcuts for a enhanced user experience using a windowed VNC connection.

To see the detailed customizations of each session consults the configuration files at: /usr/local/etc/X11/xdm and /usr/local/share/blackbox,fluxbox



Figure 8: X:1 session

## 6.2 XAPs

There are some custom applications that can be used at X11 for monitoring the slackvirt qemu machine status, network and the host system.

- xnotemon, monitor for brightness and power state.
- xbacklight-ctrl.sh, host backlight control.
- xaudio-ctrl.sh, host volume control.
- xslackvirt-powerpanel.sh, a window power panel for SMs.
- xwireless-ctrl.sh, enable disable host wireless IFs.
- gkrellms-split.sh, three configurable gkrellms instances

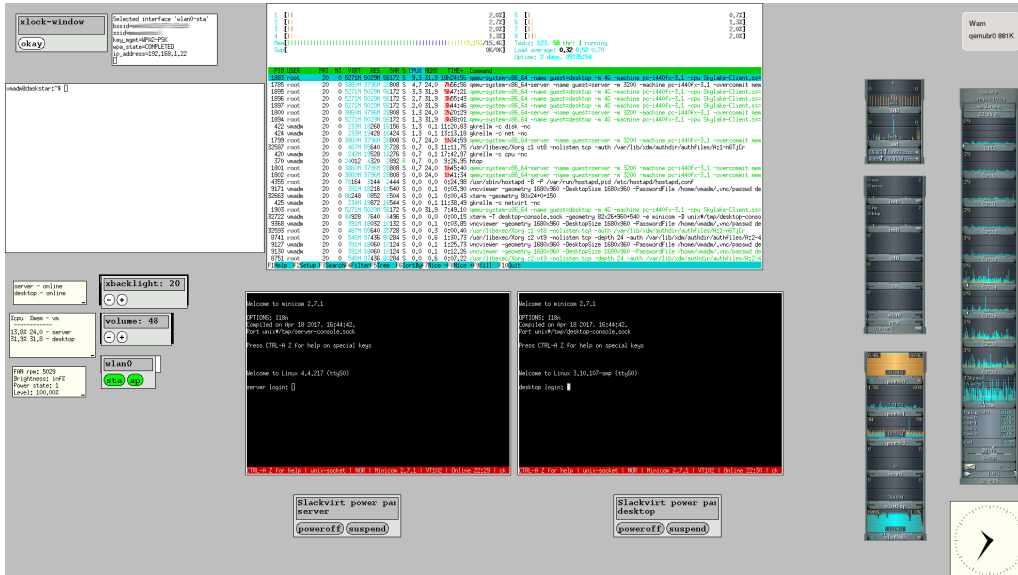


Figure 9: XDM session 1 screenshot

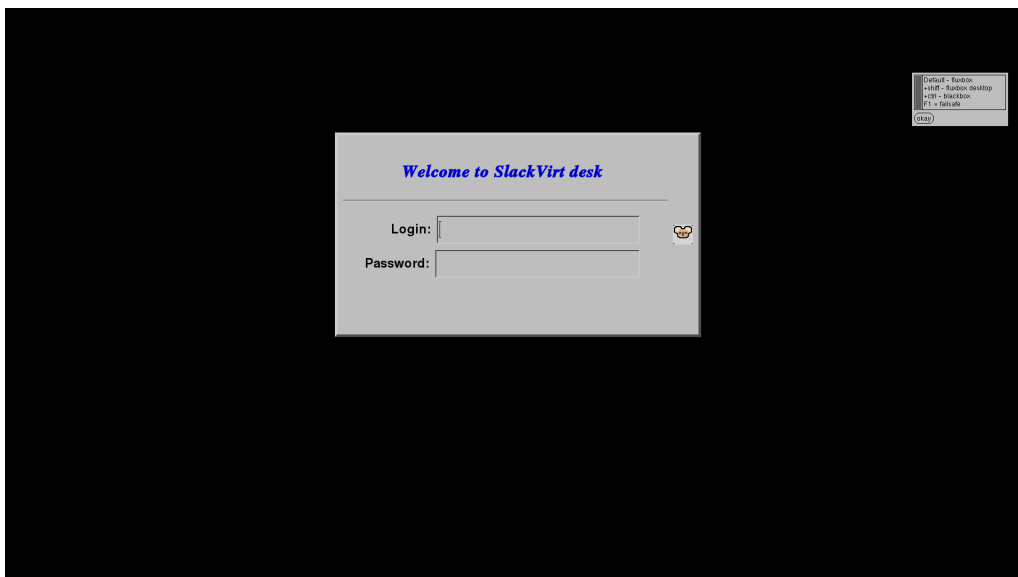


Figure 10: X:2 session



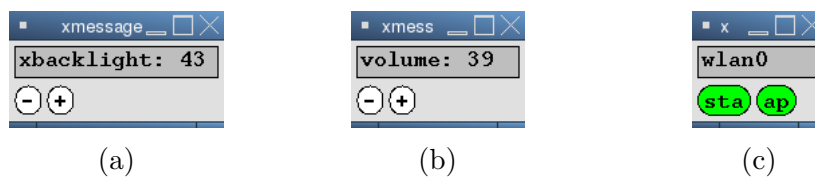
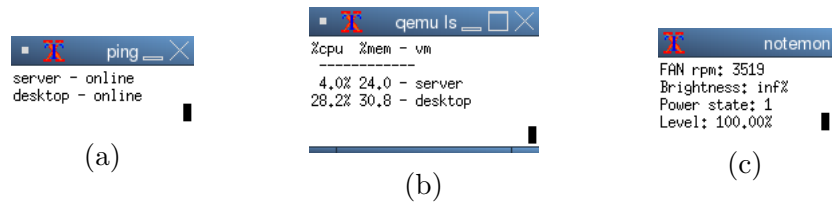


Figure 12: xmessage tools