

Browser Appliance

Getting Started Guide

The Browser Appliance is a free virtual machine (available from the VMware Technology Network at www.vmware.com/vmtn/vm) that allows you to browse the Internet securely using Mozilla Firefox, running under Ubuntu Linux 5.10, optimized for browsing. You can run the Browser Appliance with VMware Player to experience the many benefits of virtualization on the desktop.

With the Browser Appliance, you can:

- **Protect against adware and spyware:** Protect your PC against adware, spyware, and other malware by browsing the Internet with Mozilla Firefox in a virtual machine. The Browser Appliance leverages the isolation capabilities of virtual machines to prevent malware downloaded in the browser from propagating to the normal desktop.
- **Safeguard personal information:** By automatically resetting the environment after every use, users safeguard personal information such as passwords, account numbers, browsing history and other personally identifiable information. The Browser Appliance can be configured to automatically reset itself after each use so personal information is never stored permanently.

Note: For information on customizing the browser Appliance, see [Closing the Browser Appliance on page 4](#) and [Getting Updates for the Browser Appliance on page 5](#).

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Using the Browser Appliance

Downloading and Installing the Browser Appliance

You can download the Browser Appliance from the VMware Technology Network at www.vmware.com/vmtn/vm/. From the same download page, you can download VMware Player, a free VMware application that you can use to run the Browser Appliance. To install the Browser Appliance, simply unzip the download file on your local hard drive.

If you obtained the Browser Appliance on CD, open the CD and copy the file `Browser-Appliance-1.0.0.zip` to your local hard drive and unzip.

Running the Browser Appliance

To run the Browser Appliance:

1. Launch VMware Player.
2. In the dialog box **Browse for Virtual Machine Configuration File**, browse to the directory where you installed the Browser Appliance, select the file `Browser-Appliance.vmx`, and click **Open**.

The Browser Appliance powers on automatically, and the Ubuntu Linux operating system, provided with the Browser Appliance, boots up. This may take several minutes.

Then the Mozilla Firefox browser starts automatically. Enter a URL in the location field at the top of the browser and click **Go**.

Firefox version 1.0.7 is the default browser for the Browser Appliance. Firefox version 1.5.0 is also provided. To use Firefox version 1.5.0:

1. Close any Firefox version 1.0.7 windows.
2. From the **Applications** menu, select **Internet > Firefox Web Browser (v1.5.0)**.

Connecting to the Internet through a Proxy Server

If your computer connects to the Internet through a proxy server, you will need to enter the appropriate proxy settings. Consult your local support personnel for required information such as the host name, port number, user ID, and password used to access your proxy server.

To configure proxy settings in the Firefox browser:

1. From the **Edit** menu, select **Preferences**.
2. In the Preferences dialog box, click **Connection Settings**.
3. In the Connection Settings dialog box, configure your proxy settings.

To configure proxy settings in the Synaptic Package Manager:

1. From the **System** menu, select **Administration > Synaptic Package Manager**.
2. Enter your Browser Appliance password (`vmware` by default).
3. In the Synaptic Package Manager, select **Settings > Preferences**.
4. In the **Network** tab, configure your proxy settings.

To configure proxy settings for applications that use GConf data:

1. From the **System** menu on the Ubuntu desktop, select **Preferences > Network Proxy**.
2. In the **Network Proxy Preferences** dialog box, configure your proxy settings.

To configure shell environment variables for a single shell instance, enter the following lines at a command line prompt:

```
export http_proxy="http://host.name.here:port#here"
export https_proxy="https://host.name.here:port#here"
export ftp_proxy="ftp://host.name.here:port#here"
```

To configure shell environment variables for all instantiations of Bash (the default shell) by any user in the future:

1. At a command line prompt, enter
`sudo nano /etc/bash.bashrc`
2. Enter your Browser Appliance password (**vmware** by default).

3. Add the following lines as needed:

```
export http_proxy="http://host.name.here:portnumberhere"
export https_proxy="https://host.name.here:portnumberhere"
export ftp_proxy="ftp://host.name.here:portnumberhere"
```

Changing the User Password in the Browser Appliance

The Browser Appliance has password protection for administrative functions. The Browser Appliance user and password are both initially set to **vmware**.

To change the Browser Appliance password:

1. From the **System** menu, select **Preferences > About Me** to display a dialog box where you can enter personal user information.
2. In the upper right of the dialog box, click **Change Password**.
3. In the Change Password dialog box, enter your old password (**vmware**, by default) and your new password, and click **Change Password**.

You can also change your password in a terminal window:

1. From the **Applications** menu, select **Accessories > Terminal** to open a terminal window.
2. At the prompt, enter
`passwd`
3. Enter your current password (**vmware** by default) and new password.

Obtaining Root Privileges in the Browser Appliance

To obtain root privileges in the Browser Appliance:

1. From the **Applications** menu, select **Accessories > Terminal** to open a terminal window.
At the prompt, enter
`sudo su -`
(to use the environment of "root") or
`sudo su`
(to use the environment of the existing user — **vmware** by default)
2. At the **PasswOrd** prompt, enter your Browser Appliance password (**vmware** by default).

Setting the Browser Appliance to Preserve Changes or Revert on Shutdown

You can configure the Browser Appliance to preserve changes (persistent mode) or revert to its original state on shutdown (autorevert mode) by editing the Browser Appliance configuration (.vmx) file.

1. In a text editor, go to the folder containing your Browser Appliance files, and open the Browser Appliance configuration file: `Browser-Appliance.vmx`.
2. To have the Browser Appliance revert on shutdown, add the following lines to the configuration file:

```
scsi0:0.mode = "independent-nonpersistent"
snapshot.action = "autoRevert"
snapshot.disabled = "TRUE"
```

If the configuration file does not contain these lines, the Browser Appliance preserves changes on shutdown. After you have set the configuration file, follow the instructions in the following section to close the Browser Appliance

Note: Setting a suspended virtual machine to revert on shutdown is not recommended.

Closing the Browser Appliance

How you close the Browser Appliance depends on how important portability is to you, and whether you want the Browser Appliance to revert to its original state on shutdown or preserve your changes.

Caution: By default, the Browser Appliance is set to save your changes (such as proxy settings, passwords, and bookmarks) when you shut down. If you want the Browser Appliance to revert to its original state on shutdown, you can edit the Browser Appliance configuration (.vmx) file so that the appliance reverts on shutdown, as described in the following section. This protects your computer from any spyware or other malware that is transferred to the Browser Appliance while you are browsing. However, setting the Browser Appliance to revert on shutdown will cause the Browser Appliance to discard changes you have made in the current session.

Note: A virtual machine that has been suspended must be resumed on substantially similar host hardware, and is not appropriate for maximum portability (for example, transporting the Browser Appliance on a portable disk of some sort).

To suspend your current session in either persistent or autorevert mode, and resume it at a later time:

1. Confirm that VMware Player is set to suspend on exit. In **Player > Preferences > When exiting**, set VMware Player to **Suspend the virtual machine**.
2. Select **Player > Exit** or click the **[X]** on the right-hand side of the VMware Player menu bar.
3. The virtual machine is suspended, and VMware Player exits.

Note: Although set to automatically launch at startup, Firefox cannot natively cache open-window and open-tab state between browser sessions. Third-party extensions are available that provide this functionality. From the Bookmarks menu, select **Firefox and Mozilla Links > Themes and Extensions**.

To end your current session in persistent mode:

1. VMware Player may be set to either suspend on exit or power off on exit.
2. From the **System** menu in the virtual machine, select **Log Out**.
3. If you have applications other than Firefox open, and you want to launch them again at the next session startup, choose **Save current setup**.
4. Click **Shut down**, and click **OK**.
5. The virtual machine performs an orderly shutdown, and VMware Player exits. This operation may take several minutes to complete.

To end your current session in autorevert mode, and discard all changes to the virtual machine:

If VMware Player is set to power off on exit.

1. Select **Player > Exit** or click the **[X]** on the right-hand side of the VMware Player menu bar.
2. The virtual machine performs an abbreviated shutdown, and VMware Player exits. This operation may take several minutes to complete.
All changes to the virtual machine from the current session are discarded.

If VMware Player is set to suspend on exit:

1. From the **System** menu in the virtual machine, select **Log Out**.
2. Click **Shut down**, and then click **OK**.
3. The virtual machine performs an orderly shutdown, and VMware Player exits. This operation may take several minutes to complete. All changes to the virtual machine from the current session are discarded.

Getting Updates for the Browser Appliance

You must be connected to the Internet to get software updates.

Note: You should not upgrade the Linux kernel (`linux-image-*`) and dependent packages. Doing so will disable parts of the VMware Tools functionality.

To get software updates for the Browser Appliance:

1. From the **System** menu, select **Administration > Update Manager**.
2. Enter your Browser Appliance password.
3. The Software Updates dialog box lists the updates available for your system. Select the update to install and click **Install**.

You can also use the Synaptic Package Manager to get software updates:

1. From the **System** menu, select **Administration > Synaptic Package Manager**.
2. Enter your Browser Appliance password.
3. In Synaptic Package Manager, select **Mark All Upgrades** to show all possible upgrades.
4. If there are any available upgrades marked, click **Apply** to install them.

When applicable, the Browser Appliance displays an **Update** button at the upper right. Click **Update** and enter your Browser Appliance password to get software updates.



Note: Automatic updated package fetching may be enabled using the Update Manager application. Note that automatic fetching may at times interfere with the use of Synaptic Package Manager, as they both share a common package management framework.

Removing the Browser Appliance

To remove the Browser Appliance, simply delete the directory containing your Browser Appliance files. There is no uninstallation procedure to perform. If you change your mind, you can always download another copy of the Browser Appliance from the VMware Technology Network at www.vmware.com/vmtn/vm.

Reference and Notes

The operating system for the Browser Appliance v1.0.0 virtual machine is based on Ubuntu Linux 5.10, but is optimized for browsing. The Linux kernel is the stock Linux 2.6.12-9.23 i686up kernel that ships with Ubuntu Linux 5.10. This combination of guest operating system and kernel is supported for Workstation 5.5.0 and VMware Player 1.0.0.

The Browser Appliance contains the Mozilla Firefox browser, versions 1.0.7 and 1.5.0.

The Browser Appliance contains the same VMware Tools package that ships with VMware Workstation 5.5.0 (build 18463). This VMware Tools package contains the same code as the VMware Tools package that accompanies VMware Player 1.0.0 (build 18587). Build 18587 was created separately for VMware Player 1.0.0. The version of VMware Tools that comes with the Browser Appliance (build 18463) is current, and does not need to be upgraded to be compatible with VMware Player 1.0.0.

VMware, Inc. 3145 Porter Drive Palo Alto, CA 94304 www.vmware.com

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Revision 20051212 Item: VMW-ENG-Q405-166
