

Zynstra Release Note

Release 2.7

January 2016

Overview

Release 2.7 introduces major updates to improve Appliance performance, reliability and management.

Highlights include a new server options, a major upgrade to the security gateway, simpler Appliance staging requirements, more efficient system components, and refined operational procedures for faster, less disruptive system maintenance.

Applicability

This release is applicable to all Zynstra Cloud Managed Server Appliances.

Availability

Release 2.7 will be deployed to new Cloud Managed Server Appliances from February 2016.

Upgrade of existing systems will occur from February 2016 onwards. Upgrade sequence is dependent on factors such as the current version deployed, Appliance performance and Zynstra roll-out scheduling.

Major Features

HP ProLiant Gen 9 Server Support

Zynstra is now verified on the latest HP ProLiant Gen9 hardware.

The new Z16 range of Zynstra Appliances, which supersede the Z14 range from December 2015, will benefit from improved performance and lower power and cooling requirements.

The Z16 product range, for SMB, Education and Enterprise Branch, will use ProLiant ML30, ML110, DL180 and DL380 servers.

Release 2.7 also includes features that support the flexibility to choose a range of hard disk and memory configuration options introduced with the Z16 product range.

Upgrade to Untangle 11

As part of Zynstra's Keep Current service, Appliances are upgrading from Untangle 9 to Untangle 11.

Functionally, Untangle 11 continues to offer the same security gateway features as part of a Zynstra Appliance. Under the hood, the anti-virus and anti-spam components now use the popular Bitdefender engine for better performance and efficacy.

This update makes use of some of most up-to-date security gateway technology available, underscored by Untangle recently achieving ICASA-labs certification.



Simpler Appliance Staging

Zynstra is now able to ship Appliances to site with less pre-staging with the organizations network settings. The Appliance is now able to use DHCP to acquire a WAN connection to the Zynstra Management Cloud and can have various WAN/LAN network settings configured post-installation.

This simpler staging process means Zynstra can start provision a new Appliance sooner, simplifying the purchase process and ensuring the service is up-and-running sooner.

Windows Server Core and Management Tools

In order to increase the efficiency of certain core components of every Zynstra Appliance, the domain controller (*zdc*) and file manager (*zfilemgr3*) now use Windows Server Core, a slimmer, 'headless' version of Windows Server 2012.

This has no impact on end users, however IT administrators wishes to manage the domain controller or file manager must now connect to the Appliance's management virtual machine (*zmanage*) in order to access the full suite of Windows Server management tools.

Other Updates

Temporary Password Strength

When passwords are created (for new users) or reset via the User Control Console they will now be assigned a strong, randomly generated password.

The password will be set to immediately expire, requiring the user to assign a new memorable password the next time they logon to the network.

This provides improved security for the temporary password, compared to the previous use of a single default temporary password, and brings the password assignment functionality in line with best-practices and standards such as PCI-DSS 3.0.

Faster Windows Patching

Minimising downtime, the Zynstra Windows patching procedure can now run more processes in parallel.

Faster Back-up

By making use of the new ZFS volume manager first introduced in Release 2.6, the Appliance's domain controller and file manager are now backed-up faster, and with zero downtime of those components.

Faster Cloud-Join

Appliances, once connected to an organisation's WAN, will automatically join the Zynstra Management Cloud, requiring less manual provisioning intervention by Zynstra.

This allows Zynstra's provisioning activities to complete faster and means MSPs deploying Appliances are able to access and monitor Appliances sooner.



Faster Disaster Recovery

Zynstra continues to introduce and refine operational processes to minimise downtime. This release introduces operational efficiencies and automation to ensure Zynstra is able to provide cloud-based access to data and Managed Applications in a Disaster Recovery situation.

Directions to the User Control Console

The User Control Console is now accessible directly from the root URL for the Appliance.

This has been introduced to help users who may not be aware of the full URL path.

The root URL now offers two logon options, for the Local Admin accessing the organization's User Control Console on-premises, and for MSP Partners who may be authenticating via Zynstra's Management Cloud with access to several different Appliances.

Monitoring Updates

Zynstra continuously finds new ways to monitor and new events to check to ensure system quality. Checks have been extended or added in the following areas:

- RDP monitoring
- Smartmon monitoring
- Filesystem monitoring
- Backup RPO monitoring

Other Component Upgrades

Zynstra updates and upgrades components of the solution as part of its Keep Current service.

In addition to the updates mentioned above, this release also includes:

- Xen 4.4
- Check_MK OMD 1.2.6
- Ubuntu 14.04 LTS upgrades

