

# VMware Player 7

**Ben Everard** doesn't need real computers any more. He's moved to the cloud and runs everything virtually.

**V**irtualisation software gives you the power to run many virtual machines (VMs) on a single computer. Each of these machines can have a different OS, and will run completely independently from the host machine. Here at Linux Voice, we use VMs extensively for testing out different distros, and to run our web server.

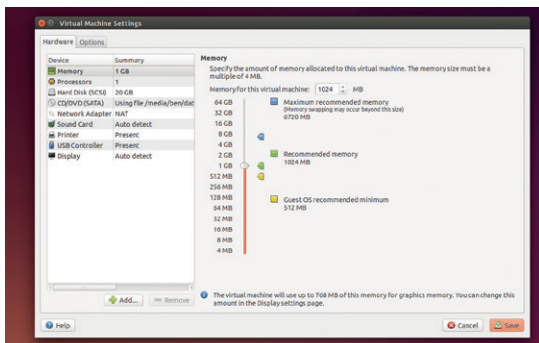
There are a few different pieces of software available for virtualisation, some open source (like *VirtualBox*) and some are proprietary (like *VMware Player*). Since it's proprietary, you won't find *Player* in your distro's repository. Instead, you need to download and execute (as root) the bundle file from [www.vmware.com/products/player/](http://www.vmware.com/products/player/).

Version 7 brings support for more RAM (up to 64GB), more CPU cores (up to 16) and more video memory (up to 2GB). It also brings the advantages for Intel's latest Haswell chips. If you're already running *VMware Player 6* and don't need any of these, version 7 may not be worth the cost of an upgrade (£63).

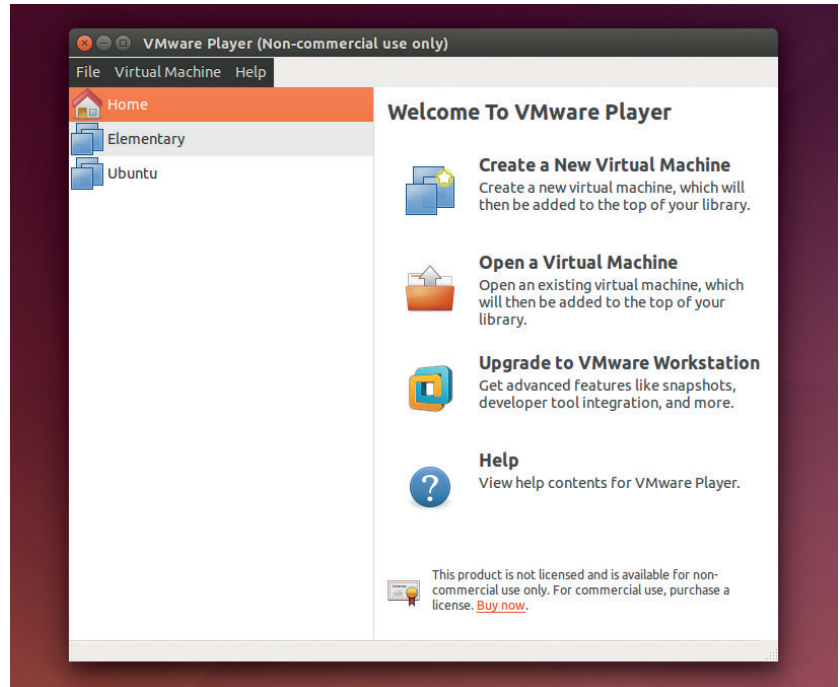
There are two different feature sets, the professional version (which enables you to run VMs that have been restricted), and the personal version (which is only allowed for non-commercial use). When you install *Player*, you'll be asked for a licence key, but you can skip this step if you want the personal version.

The graphical interface for *Player* is simple to use, and shouldn't cause any problems even if you're not familiar with virtualisation software. You just select the install media, and follow the instructions, and you should have a working virtual machine. The simple GUI is *Player's* strongest feature given that other virtualisation applications often have either confusing interfaces, or are command-line only.

*Player* gives you the ability to control most aspects of the virtual machine including the amount of memory allocated to it, the network setup, the storage available and ability to allocate more than one



*VMware Player's* settings window includes useful hints for beginners to help them choose sensible settings for their virtual machines.




processing core to the VM. You can also enable USB support for versions 1 to 3 of the protocol.

The clutter-free interface presents the user with only the options they need.

## Performance

We tested *Player* against the most similar open source software (*VirtualBox*) in a speed test. The challenge was simple: Which could boot ElementaryOS the fastest? *Player* took 29 seconds from starting the VM to the desktop being fully loaded, but *VirtualBox* managed the task in 25 seconds. That's a performance difference of 16% in favour of the open source software.

If you're looking to move up to enterprise-level virtualisation solutions, *VMware's* software has some significant advantages (but comes at a significant cost). *Player* is the first rung on the ladder up to this. However, unless you're planning on using it alongside the more powerful specialised *VMware* tools, *VMware Player* doesn't offer any significant advantages over open source solutions (and is missing some useful features like snapshots). As proprietary software, it doesn't link in with distro-specific tools such as the package manager. 

## DATA

**Web**  
[www.vmware.com](http://www.vmware.com)  
**Developer**  
VMware  
**Price**  
Free for non-commercial use, or £120

## LINUX VOICE VERDICT

*VMware Player* is let down by not having snapshots, and is poor value for money compared to other options.

