



THE SLOG

SimonLong/blog

“Slog
(plural [slogs](#))
(mostly UK) A long, tedious walk,
or session of work.”

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Posted by Simon Long May 28, 2010

Using vMAAs Your ESXi Syslog Server



Welcome to **The SLOG!** ! If you are new here, you might want to [subscribe to the RSS feed](#) for regular Virtualization related posts.

```
hostd.log      hostd.log.4  messages.log  messages.log.4  messages.log.8  vpxa.log.11  vpx
hostd.log.1    hostd.log.5  messages.log.1  messages.log.5  vpxa.log        vpxa.log.12  vpx
hostd.log.2    hostd.log.6  messages.log.2  messages.log.6  vpxa.log.1      vpxa.log.13  vpx
hostd.log.3    hostd.log.7  messages.log.3  messages.log.7  vpxa.log.10     vpxa.log.14  vpx
```

This is something I did a while ago, but it came to my attention that people didn't; a) Know that it's recommended to use a syslog server with ESXi b) You could use an application built in to vMA called vilogger.

Although it is stated in [The Architecture of VMware ESXi](#)



Because the in-memory file system does not persist when the power is shut down, log files do not survive a reboot. ESXi has the ability to configure a remote syslog server, enabling you to save all log information on an external system.

.....it is not a well known fact. So that is partly the reason for writing the post. The other reason is to introduce you to vilogger, which is part of the vMA. Of course you can use which ever syslog server you wish, if you plan to use your own, be sure to checkout [Managing VMware ESXi](#) page #68 to view the configuration steps.

I'm not going to take you through the steps of installing vMA, nor am I going to tell you all about what the vMA (vSphere Management Assistant) does. If you want to read more about that please find the relevant links in the Sources section at the bottom of the page. But I am going to take you through the steps I took to use vMA as my ESXi syslog server.

First of all, download the vMA from [here](#). Import and configure it using the steps in the [vSphere Management Assistant Guide](#)

Changing vMA localtime settings to avoid incorrect log timestamps

When vMA collects the logs from your ESXi Host, sometimes the logs have the ESXi Host timestamp and sometimes they will have the vMA localtime timestamp. I'm not exactly sure why this happens, but it does. (You may or may not know that ESXi uses UTC as its timezone when it timestamps the logs. You can read more about that [here](#). VMware have told me this cannot be changed.)

So to get around the issue of differing timestamps in your collected logs we need to change the localtime on the vMA to UTC. This can be done using the following steps:

- `sudo rm /etc/localtime`
- `sudo ln -s /usr/share/zoneinfo/UTC /etc/localtime`

If you use NTP to sync your environments time, it might be worth adding in your ntp servers onto the vMA.

- `sudo nano /etc/ntp.conf`
- Add in your ntp servers under the heading: `# Use public servers from the pool.ntp.org project.`
- Configure ntpd to start on reboot: `sudo /sbin/chkconfig ntpd on`
- Restart ntpd: `sudo /sbin/service ntpd restart`
- Make sure your ntp servers are reachable: `sudo ntpq -p`

Whilst your at it you could change your keyboard for those of you outside the US.

- `sudo vi /etc/sysconfig/keyboard`
 - change KEYTABLES="us" to use the keyboard you have, for example: KEYTABLES="en"

Adding a second Hard Disk to store your logs

About The SLOG

Hey guys, Welcome!
I'm [Simon Long](#) and I've setup this Blog to pass on my experiences and other useful information, mostly focused around [Virtualization](#).



VMware Backup:

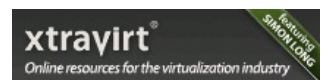
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Because of the amount of ESXi Hosts I have to manage I decided that I would add a second Virtual Disk to house my logs. You may not need to do this if you only have 1 or two Hosts.

- Add a second Hard Disk to the vMA VM
- PowerOn vMA
- Login using **vi-admin**
- Format the new Disk with the following command: **fdisk /dev/sdb**
 - Use the **n** command to create a new partition
 - Use the **p** command to make the new partition a primary partition
 - Press **1** to make it partition #1
 - Use the **default** for the First Cylinder
 - Use the **default** for the Last Cylinder
 - Use the **p** command to verify the partition table
 - Use the **w** command to write the partition table to the hard disk
- Press **Enter** a couple of times to confirm it's finished and return to the command prompt
- Now we need to format the partition using the follow command: **mkfs -t ext3 /dev/sdb1**

Now we have our new disk ready, we now need to mount it.

- Edit /etc/fstab using the following command: **nano /etc/fstab**
- Enter in the following line: **/dev/sdb1 /var/log/syslog ext3 defaults,auto 1 2**
- Use **Ctrl+X** then **Y** to save the file
- Next: **cd /var/log/** then **mkdir syslog**
- Change the owner of the /syslog dir: **sudo chown vi-admin:root /var/log/syslog**
- finally **mount /var/log/syslog** to mount the disk

Ok, now our new Disk is mounted, we need to tell the vlogger application to store your logfiles there. The default location is /var/log/vmware so we need to change it.

- Edit the vlogger config file using: **nano /etc/vmware/viconfig/vilogdefaults.xml** (or **/etc/vmware/VMA/VMA.conf** in v4.1)
- Change the file to match this: **<location>/var/log/syslog</location>** (This appears twice, change both)
- Use **Ctrl+X** then **Y** to save the file
- Restart vlogger by: **service vmware-vilogd restart**

Now vlogger is set to store your ESXi logfiles onto your new disk.

Configure vMA to collect your logs

Next we configure vMA and vlogger to collect your ESXi logfiles.

- Connect your ESXi Host to vMA using the following command: **sudo vifp addserver <FQDN of ESXi Host>**
- Enter the **Root Password** for the Host
- Once the Host has been added you can double check by running the following command: **vifp listservers**
- Now set vlogger to start collecting your logs: **vlogger enable -server <FQDN of ESXi Host> -numrotation 20 -maxfilesize 10 -collectionperiod 10**

```
Target Server:
hostd          ... Enabled
messages       ... Enabled
vpxa           ... Enabled
```

You will see the above displayed, showing that vlogger is now collecting logs from your Host.

Values **-numrotation 20 -maxfilesize 10 -collectionperiod 10** can be changed to suit your needs. If you just run the **vlogger -help** command you will see what options and values are available.

Viewing your logs

Now your vMA is collecting your logs you can view them by: **dir /var/log/syslog/<FQDN of Host>** You can view your logs in real time if you wish, read more about there [here](#).

- An example: **tail -f /var/log/syslog/<FQDN of Host>/vpxa.log**

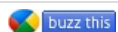
Sources:

- [Setting timezone in ESXi or not](#)
- [The Architecture of VMware ESXi](#)
- [vSphere Management Assistant Guide](#)
- [VMware KB1007551](#)

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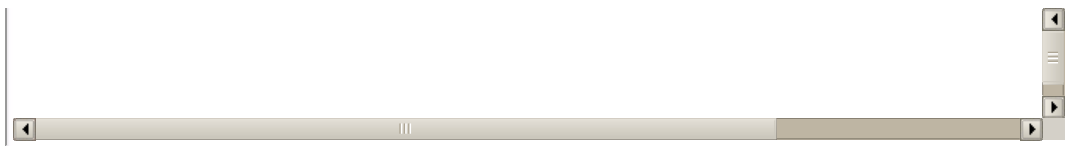
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Craig 2 months ago

I get the following error when trying to enable logging for one of my ESXi hosts

Error: Unable to communicate with vmware-vilogd daemon.

have ran through the steps again and pretty sure I haven't missed anything.

Anyone help ?



Simon Long ★ 2 months ago in reply to Craig

To get around the error Craig has been experiencing, try:

```
sudo /etc/init.d/vmware-vilogd stop
sudo /etc/init.d/vmware-vilogd start
```

Simon



Chris 2 months ago

Thanks for the info, I did have to change the owner of `/var/log/syslog` in order for `vilogd` to stay running: `sudo chown vi-admin:root /var/log/syslog`. The `vilogd` log was not very helpful though (`/var/log/vmware/vima/vilogd.log`).

And an easy way to have it enable logging for all servers that have been added to the vMA is to use a for loop:
for SERVER in \$(vifp listservers | awk '{print(\$1)}'); do vlogger enable --server \$SERVER --numrotation 20 --maxfilesize 10 --collectionperiod 10; done



Matt Liebowitz 1 month ago in reply to Chris

Chris is right - I had to run the `chown` command to make this work as well.



Simon Long ★ 1 month ago in reply to Matt Liebowitz

Thanks Matt, I've added the owner change into the steps above.

Simon



Simon Long ★ 2 months ago in reply to Chris









Hi Chris, cheers for the feedback. As soon as I get a moment to test, I'll see if I needed to `chmod` that directory.

Simon



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