

RAM-based virtualisation (incl. cluster) now also without hardware

Pfaffhausen, 1 October 2012: *With the introduction of the new RAM-based ArchivistaBox Community 2012/IX, we are finally able to make good on an old promise. The ArchivistaVM server is now also available without hardware, as a pure software solution in the form of ArchivistaVM Light. The reason it took us so long will be explained in the blog post below.*

ArchivistaVM Light: Just as simple as the ArchivistaBox

Since the introduction of the ArchivistaBox systems, we have placed great value on keeping our solutions simple. **Easy to install, easy to maintain and easy to operate.** With the **release of ArchivistaVM 1.x**, this aim to maintain simplicity was only partially fulfilled; later updates were only possible on the console, software RAIDs and/or virtualisation clusters were not available; user management was missing entirely. The **promise we provided back then of being able to order an ArchivistaVM solution without hardware (for the price of an ArchivistaBox Budget)** was clearly only really feasible for administrative-pros only who had profound Linux skills. To make a long story short: without hardware, success was not apparent in the usual small and medium sized business environments.



In the meantime, we have succeeded in making the ArchivistaVM solution considerably simpler. Thanks to the technology we **introduced with ArchivistaBox Community**, the **ArchivistaVM solutions can be operated without installation** directly via the included USB stick; or, as [Swiss IT Magazine](#) so poignantly put it: **Archivista gets rid of installation**. This means that the most difficult hurdle has been surmounted. A

system that doesn't have to be installed is so simple that we are able to sell it without any hardware whatsoever.

ArchivistaVM Light: Small and medium sized business server virtualisation with free check

As the entire boot process runs in RAM, the most difficult obstacles to providing support for a wide range of hardware have been overcome. Should any doubts remain as to whether ArchivistaVM Light runs on specific hardware, there are two options. **Either, the ArchivistaBox Community Mini can be booted up,** or the computer can be brought to us (after prior appointment) so that a **free check can be run on our premises.** This is also applicable if instead of a server that is currently in use for ArchivistaVM Light, a new hardware should or must be obtained.

A key aspect for us with regard to RAM-based ArchivistaBoxes was and is ensuring a good basis in order to allow maintenance and running of the virtualisation over an extended period of time — even without the included (certified) hardware. The aim of ArchivistaVM Light is not to distribute as many support tickets as possible. On the contrary, it is our goal to provide a solution that **allows our customers (even those without Linux skills) to operate the systems themselves, without our assistance.** Of course we are always happy to assist and support you if necessary, but always with the intention that we want to help you help yourself.



Our company is geared entirely towards small and medium sized businesses. We are aware of the fact that budgets are modest (one could almost say austere), but the hardware redundancy with virtualisation, for example, is not just a gimmick — on the contrary, with regard to data backup it makes it possible to enable **servers to only shut down for a few seconds at most in order to ensure complete data backup**

(not just snapshots!). Why are snapshots (source-dependent images) not useful in small and medium sized companies? Snapshots cannot be booted on a completely different (new) hardware, but it is precisely this simplicity that small and medium sized businesses need, so that if disaster strikes (malfunction), expensive external specialists are not needed.

ArchivistaVM Light for Budget, Summit und Universal

A simple software such as ArchivistaVM Light should also be easy to order and should offer transparent terms and conditions. Differentiation according to sockets (CPU versions), RAM, network cards — all of these things make the process unnecessarily complicated and exist only so that a qualified salesperson is needed to help the overwhelmed customer. Let's be honest — what **makes software that uses more than one CPU socket , or where RAM is upgraded from 32 to 64 GB, so very different? The solution itself isn't any different at all!** A Linux kernel can be compiled for practically any number of CPU cores, even if they require differing amounts of RAM and other software.

Only when it comes to hard drives is a distinction warranted. Systems without redundant hard drives cannot be recommended; but two drives are surely more simple than four or more hard disks. And this is precisely why our **ArchivistaVM Light systems are differentiated only based on the number of hard drives.** The Budget version comes with two hard drives, Summit comes with four and for anything above that, the ArchivistaVM Light license for the Universal model is used. On the whole, we recommend that our customers do without RAID controllers and instead use software RAID, whereby Hot SWAP should also be used — generally, **support is available for all hardware in ArchivistaVM Light, insofar as the relevant drivers are available in the Linux kernel.** The products can be found in the web shop — just select **ArchivistaVM Light (without hardware).**

With the exception of the hardware, ArchivistaVM Light solutions include the same scope of functions as the hardware-based ArchivistaVM solutions. Response time: 8 hours during business hours (reduced approach), all updates provided free of charge, first 12 months maintenance contract included in the price, automatic extension by 12 months if not cancelled 3 months before expiry and (this is where we differ considerably from our competition) the following support years are not billed at full price, but at the customary 20% of the purchase price. **Example pricing ArchivistaVM Summit Light:** any number of CPUs (sockets), any amount of RAM, max. 4 hard drives: initial price in euros: **EUR 400 in the first year, from the second year EUR 80, over the course of three years a total of EUR 560.** Prices are per server, all servers are to be licensed within one company for virtualisation (all ArchivistaVM systems), the number of guests or the replacement/extension of a computer with more RAM or CPUs is possible anytime.

The advantages of ArchivistaVM Light at a glance

ArchivistaVM Light offers the following advantages relating to server virtualisation as compared to other solutions:

- **No installation necessary** (installation directly from USB stick/CD)
- **Minimal amount of RAM required** (<100 MB per USB stick/CD, approx. 500 MB of RAM)
- Extremely fast **start-up of the system in approx. 20 to 30 seconds**
- Update of the system by changing the USB stick (**up- or down-grading possible any time**)
- **RAM is considerably faster than any other hard drive** (including the most expensive SSD disks)
- **Supports all hardware** (own Linux kernel with all necessary drivers)
- **Hardware and software RAID with up to 24 disks** per server (in the standard package)
- Star-shaped **cluster concept, no redundant switches needed** (not even with 10 or 40 GBit)
- Concept for **data backup (full backups with minimal downtime** in just a few seconds)
- **Work with any web browser** (no client installation necessary)
- Script **ArchivistaVM Light via the command line**
- **All source code is disclosed** (accessible directly via ArchivistaVM solution)
- Extensive **documentation in PDF format and directly in the browser**; access to WebSVN server (subversion)
- Support for **all 32 and 64 bit operating systems** (incl. support for optimisation, e.g. virtio)
- **Maintenance contract at a very low 20% of initial price** (low, fixed follow-up costs)

Finally, it should be mentioned that ArchivistaVM Light is recommended if an internal IT department exists that is able to order and maintain the hardware components. If this is not the case, the normal ArchivistaVM systems (incl. hardware) are recommended.