

WMLUG Meeting Notes - April 2007

FreeNX

FreeNX is a GPL/free implementation of NoMachine's NX server which is a terminal server and remote access solution. Originally designed for remote X connections, it can act as a pass-through to another computer to connect via RDP or VNC. This is a client-server application but due to compression, caching, and round-trip traffic suppression, it is faster than native X, VNC or RDP connections for low-bandwidth/low-speed connections. Under the low speed conditions, for X connections it is 70 times faster than native, and for VNC and RDP, it is 10 times faster than native. Since the NX protocol is faster than RDP or VNC, for 2 to 10 times faster access to Windows computers, a NX server can be set up on that computer.

There are clients for Linux, Windows, Mac OS X, and Solaris. Also, NoMachine provides a free non-GPL server in addition to their commercial product. The commercial product provides remote multimedia support.

The FreeNX website is <http://freenx.berlios.de/>. The NoMachine website is <http://www.nomachine.com/>.

Installation - Server

Search for the freenx package in your distribution's repository. If not found there, check the <http://freenx.berlios.de/download.php> page. Install as you normally would.

Configuration – Server

Since FreeNX uses the SSH protocol, make sure that the SSH port is open in the firewall and that the server has the SSH daemon running.

After installation on the server, do the following:

```
nxsetup --install --setup-nomachine-key
```

This runs the initial configuration allowing logging in by any existing user on the server. If you want to control who can log in, by needing a specific ssh key, do the following instead:

```
nxsetup --install
```

The generated ssh key then needs to be copied to the client computers for them to connect.

Installation - Client

Download the free client from NoMachine and install as normal on computers you want to connect from.

For Linux, make sure that the SSH port is open in the firewall and that the daemon is running.

Configuration – Client

Run the connection wizard, NX Connection Wizard, to set up a new connection.

The Session screen lets you to name the connection/session, specify the FreeNX server and port, as well as the compression level. Note that the 'LAN' setting has no compression enabled.

The Desktop screen specifies the type of connection (Unix = X, Windows = RDP, VNC = VNC) and screen size. If you choose Windows or VNC, you get prompted for the remote system's connection details. For Unix, you get to specify the X desktop type (KDE, Gnome, etc.). If you want the traffic encrypted, check the "Enable SSL encryption of all traffic" box.

The final screen can create a desktop short if desired.

You can edit the settings once you launch the shortcut.

Usage

Launch the shortcut for a connection and enter your login credentials for the FreeNX server. Important: If you are intending to connect to the FreeNX server you will get a X session. If you are connecting to another computer, say a Windows box, don't enter those credentials here. They are passed to that computer by the FreeNX server using the settings you saved earlier.

Additional Resources

Faster remote desktop connections with FreeNX

<http://applications.linux.com/article.pl?sid=06/05/05/1718238&from=rss>

HOWTO Install FreeNX Server on SUSE 10

<http://madpenguin.org/cms/html/17/5755.html>