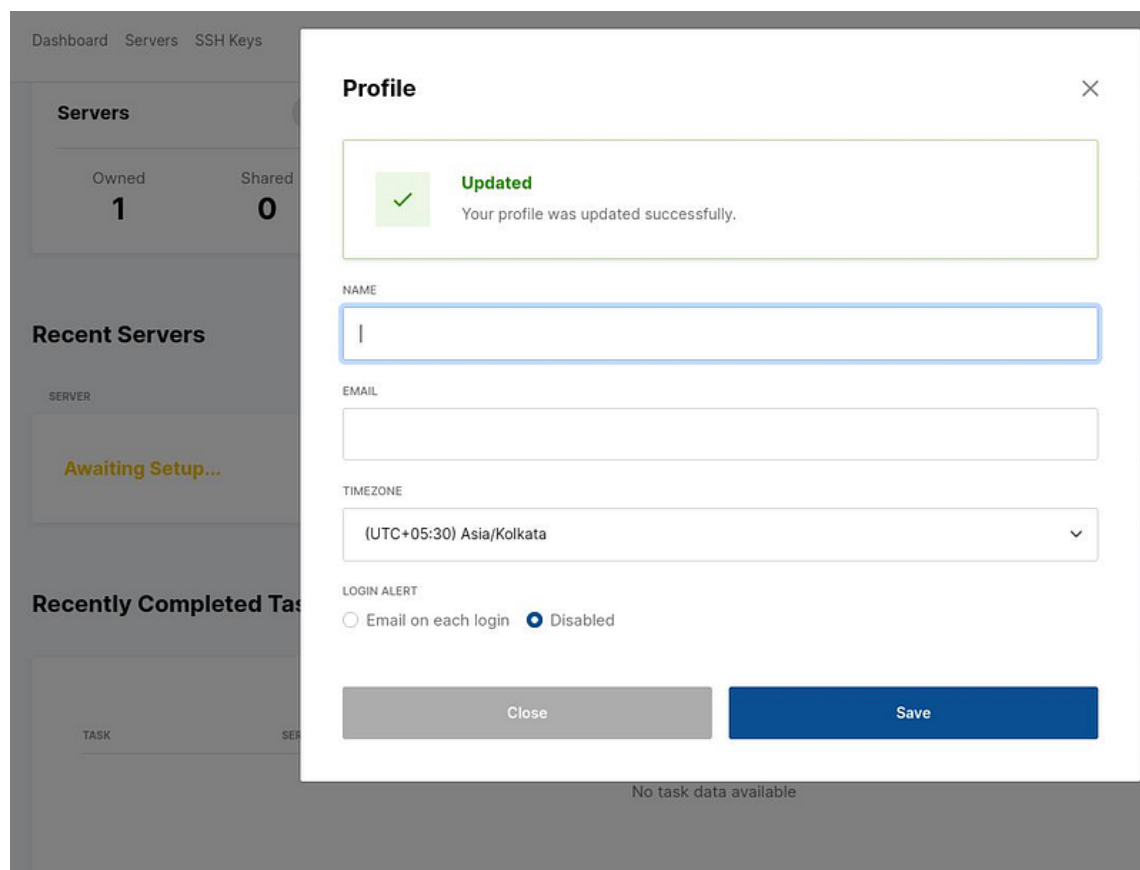


blog.amarvyas.in

First Impressions:VirtFusion Server Management Control Panel

10-12 minutes

In this post, you will find an introduction and overview of VirtFusion server control panel. This post is a hybrid of sorts, that is, will cover the “what” and the “how” together in this post. The “what” will cover how to install the VirtFusion panel, what are the minimum hardware and operating system specifications, and so on. We will refer to the installation and configuration documentation for this. In parallel, I will also include screenshots from the time I had tested this panel. This is intended to aid a subscriber to a VPS, i.e. a typical end user’s perspective.



VirtFusion Server Panel

In this post

- i. [Background: Server Control Panels](#)
- ii. [Introduction: VirtFusion as Server Control Panel](#)
- iii. Installation Options
 - a. [Install as a Control Server](#)
 - b. [Installation as a Hypervisor](#)
- iv. [Wrapping Up and Final Thoughts](#)

Background: Server Control Panels

A [server control or management panel](#) is a front end interface that allows you to set up the server for your use. Using these panels, you can configure settings for ip address, accounts, email, security, content management system, server update/upgrades, backups, and so on. Many of these tasks can be performed using the command line or terminal of course. But the panels make the administration a tad more convenient.

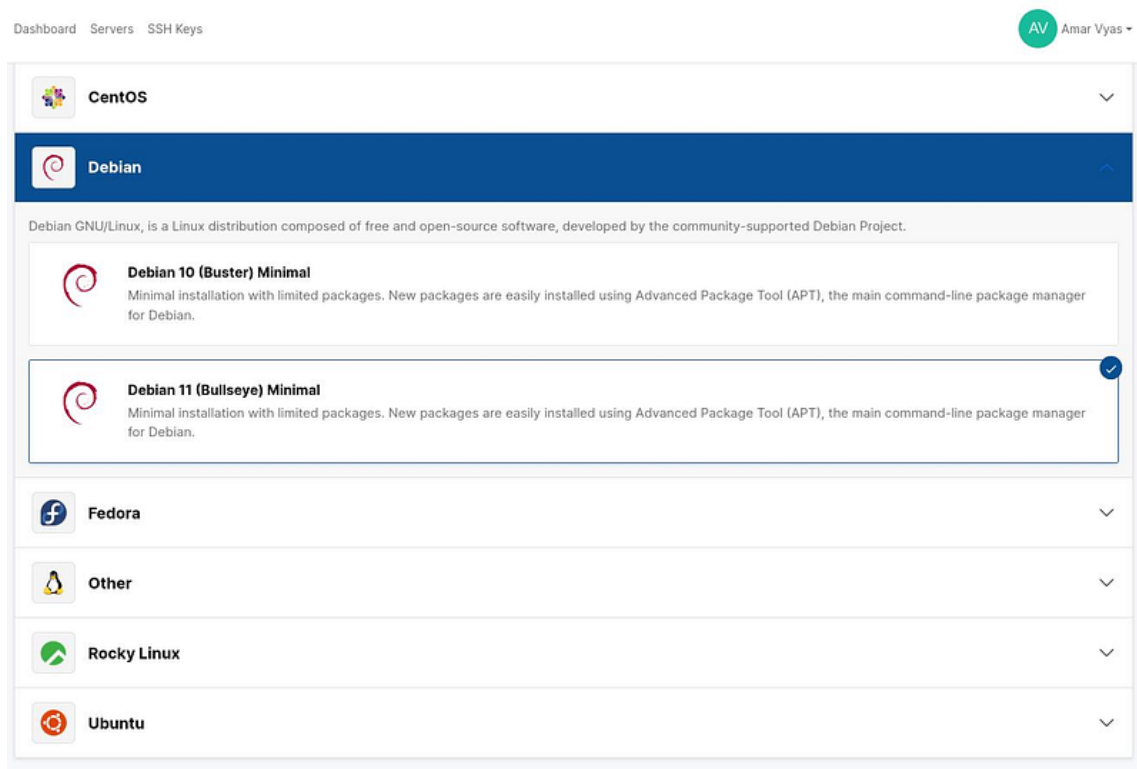
Particularly if you are a web hosting or a service provider who manages the system, and your clients actually conduct the operations on the server.

In other words, the easier and the more user friendly the interface and the features of a server panel, the more convenient it can become for the average Jay/ Jui user. And by that logic, this can result in lesser questions for customer service or support tickets to the service provider. I have written about the server panels a fair number of times on this blog. Many of

them are “free and open source”, others are “free but propitiatory”, some are freemium while for others you have to pay from the get go. VirtFusion falls in the last category, though they do have a 30 day free trial which we will cover later.

You can find some of my posts about Server Panels below:

- [Tinycp](#)
- [Server Avatar](#)
- [VPS Noobs](#)
- Gridpane (coming soon)



Selecting Operating System for VirtFusion

Introduction to VirtFusion Server Control Panel

I got introduced to VirtFusion recently through a post on [LowEndSpirit Forums](#). Phil, the developer/ creator of this panel, is a seasoned hand in this space. He was the original founder of SolusVM.. Some of the [VPS Benchmarks in this blog](#) are from service providers who use this panel : [GreenCloudVPS](#),

Inception Hosting, and [PHP-Friends](#) to name a few.

The post by VirFusion (Phil) created some excitement on LES, and some questions and discussions about pro's and limitations of the VirtFusion Panel. ExtraVM offered some “trial” VPS'es using this server panel. I signed up, eager to take a look at this new panel.

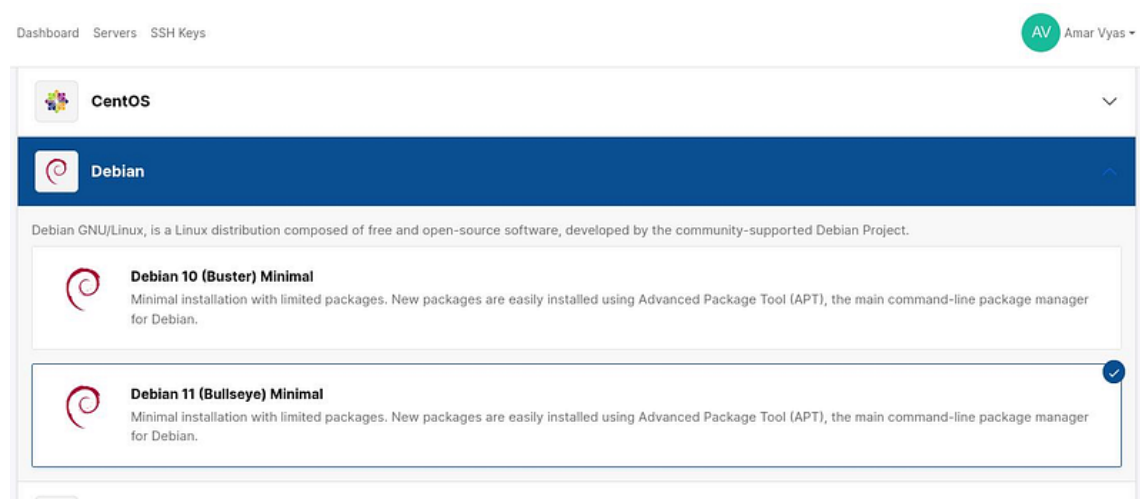
Note that at the time of writing this post in first week of March 2022, version 2.1.x is the most current version. Two weeks ago, I had probably tested Version 1.1.5. In other words, about 3 versions released in less than a month's time. As the numbering system and the log may indicate, many of the changes are fixes or incremental changes. But it also means one thing: if you [read the log](#), you would notice that development is taking place rapidly. Don't be surprised if you see that the version 2.1.x that I refer to below will be superseded by the time you read this post.

What is VirtFusion and What can it be used for

In a nutshell, you can use VirtFusion as a Control Server or Hypervisor. We will get into that in a bit.

Minimum specifications or hardware requirements for installation, as per the documentation, are:

Minimum 2048MB memory and 10GB disk space





Installation options as a Server Panel

You can install as Control Server or Hypervisor (KVM). I posted a similar line in the above section. The attempt to repeat myself was deliberate. You may wonder what exactly is the difference in the two installation types? The more advanced users, or those who have the technical chops to understand: the difference between the two stated use cases will understand right away. For the rest of us, self included, let us make an attempt to highlight the difference.

Installation as Control Server

For the sake of simplicity, let us consider a standalone VPS or a Virtual Private server that you might have subscribed to from one of the many fine providers that have been covered in this blog. Keeping the minimum specifications in mind, this happens to be a 2 core/ 2 GB RAM VPS with say 20 GB of disk space. You want to use this server for setting up a database, installing some monitoring tools, or running some scripts. For legitimate uses of course. Like I mentioned earlier, a lot of the server admin work or heavy lifting can be managed via the terminal or command line. But what if you had a graphical interface to help you in the same? You know for tasks like installing the Operating System, taking backups, rebooting the system, configuring firewall and the likes? That would be rather convenient, isn't it? With that in mind, let us take a look at VirtFusion as a Control

Server.

Name
The server name allows you to easily identify the server under your account. If the server requires a valid hostname, you should set the hostname here.

Operating SystemSELF INSTALL? ☒



Self installation may limit the systems ability to fully control the server. You should only use this option if none of the automated operating systems are suitable and you are comfortable installing from ISO media.

The Virtual Network Computing (VNC) option has been automatically enabled for you.

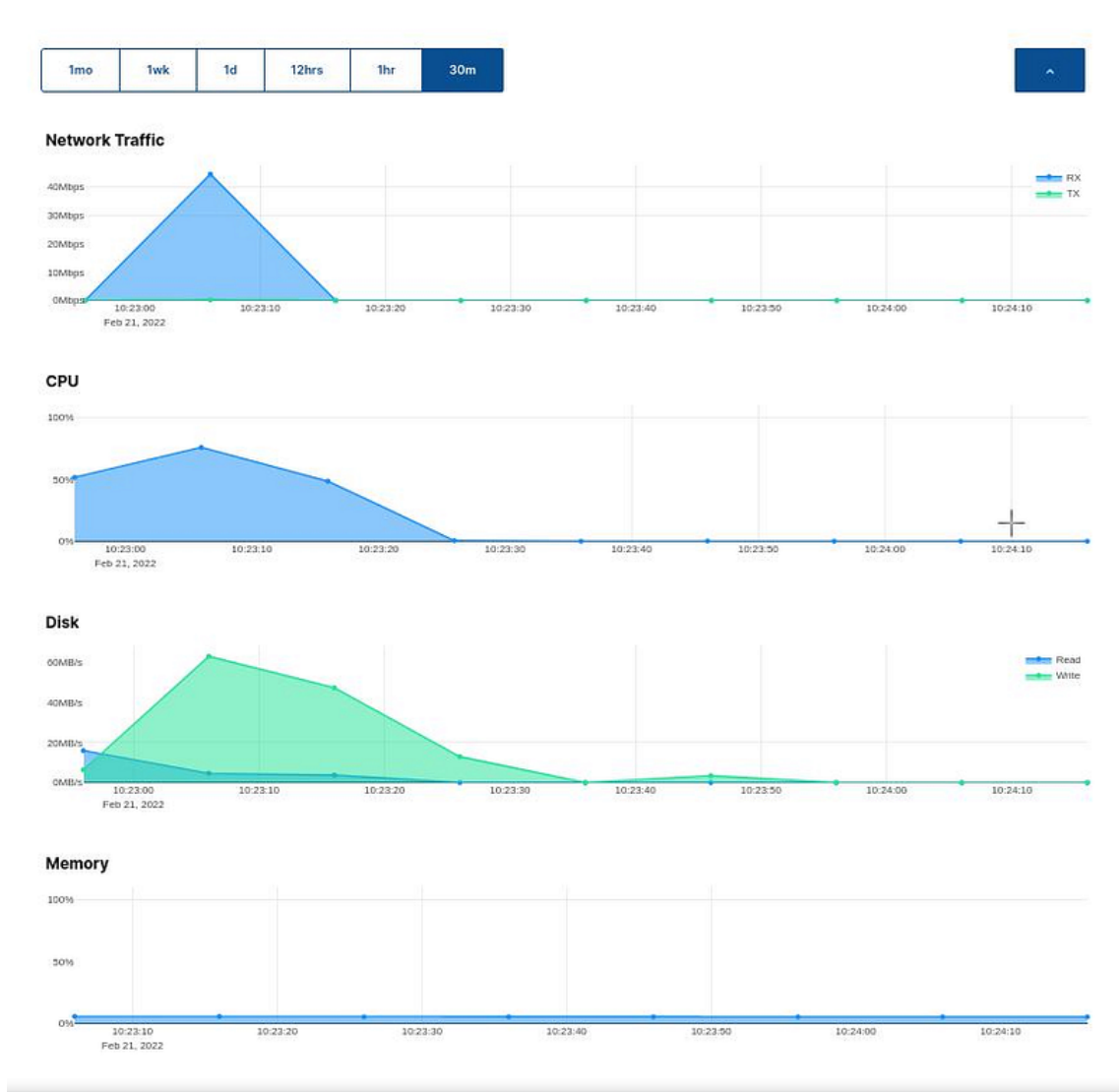


Adding an SSH key will help keep your server secure by allowing us to disable password authentication

If you don't add one, we will enable password authentication and email you the root/admin password once the server has been built.

The documentation for installation and configuration is short but rather easy to follow. If you are getting started; you can install this control panel on a VPS with Debian 11, Rocky Linux, AlmaLinux. A fresh or clean install would be highly recommended. I am speaking from personal experience with some other panels. Over the past three years while using and testing and breaking server panel installations, an important lesson I have learnt is:

{ clean install of OS+ clean install of Panel = lesser chances of errors.



Server Monitoring Dashboard

Now, let us take a look at the Hypervisor option.

Installation of VirtFusion as Hypervisor

This would be a typical use case for a web hosting provider, or individuals who are adept at setting up their own Dedicated server. In order to use VirtFusion as a Hypervisor, some additional steps are required, particularly for networking, etc. Which are [well covered in the installation documentation](#).

I did not test this option and may not be applicable or relevant to most end users.

Installation Process

I mentioned my preference for Debian earlier, so let us assume we have a shiny new (or squeaky clean) VPS with Debian 11 installed on it. If you intend to install VirtFusion on it, the command goes something like this:

```
{curl https://install.virtfusion.net/install-control-debian-11.sh | sh  
-s --verbose
```

The installer will install a few tools of the (server management) trade. These includes web server, redis (caching) , the front end for the control panel, database server, and other features one might expect to be offered.

Setting up SSL certificate

SSL setup requires additional (recommended) step. The documentation recommends using ZeroSSL to generate the certificate.

After the Installation

Once the installation is complete, you will see the URL for login in the terminal window. You will also find your username and password for the administrator account. This is quite a (now) familiar method for a few other panels including aapanel, HestiaCP/VestaCP and so forth. Even the command line utilities like Webinoly.

Once you login

If you follow the link to the login page, and enter the administrator details correctly, you enter your license details. That should get you started.

Note: VirtFusion offer a 30 day “evaluation” license if you would like to roll up your sleeves and try it out yourself. You can also check out their [early adopter pricing](#) if you would like to get a license.

VirtFusion's Command Line Interface

Most server management panels or control panels in general have a command line utility in addition to the graphical interface. The latter, is primarily intended for the 'non-root' or 'non-admin' users. The server administrators may prefer the command like utility. Gridpane has `gpccli`; Wordops has `wo`; Webinoly has `site`, and so on.

For VirtFusion, the in order to run tasks using the command like utility , you can simply enter

```
(vfcli-ctrl vf
```

This option offers a series of commands that can help in administration of the server, I am listing a few of the basic tasks below. You can check the documentation page for more details.

To keep the system in maintenance mode,

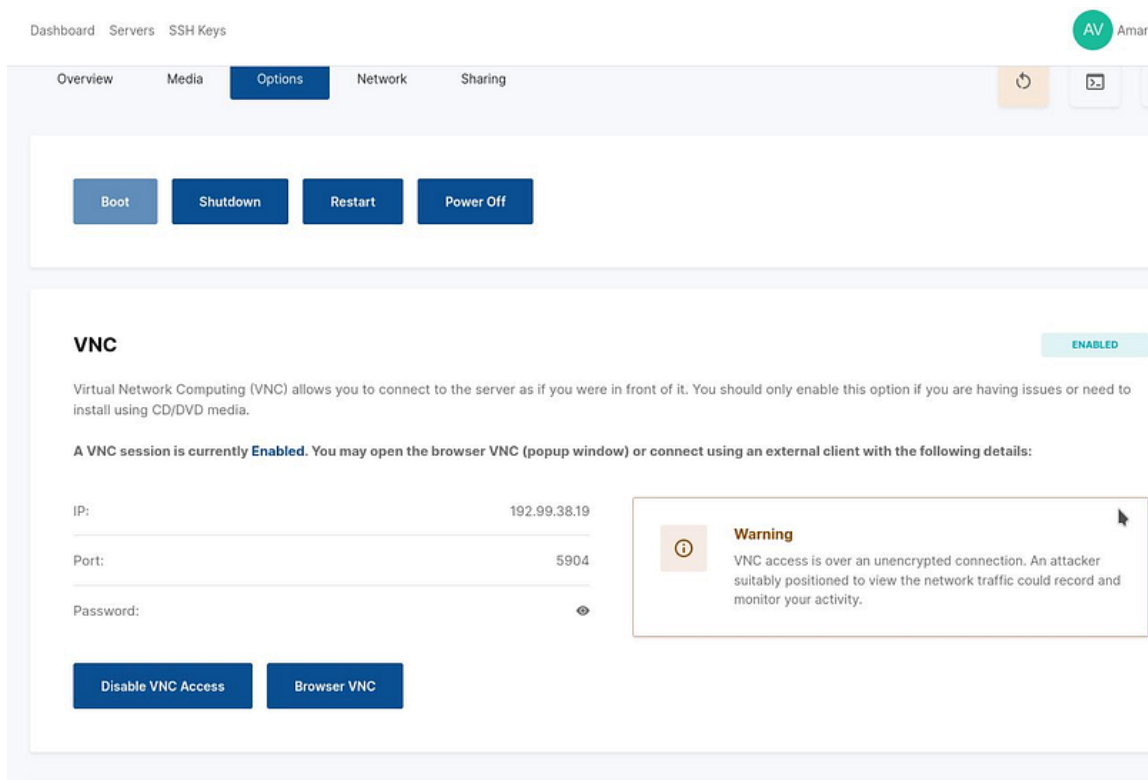
```
($vfcli-ctrl down
```

To limit access of the panel to specified ip addresses:

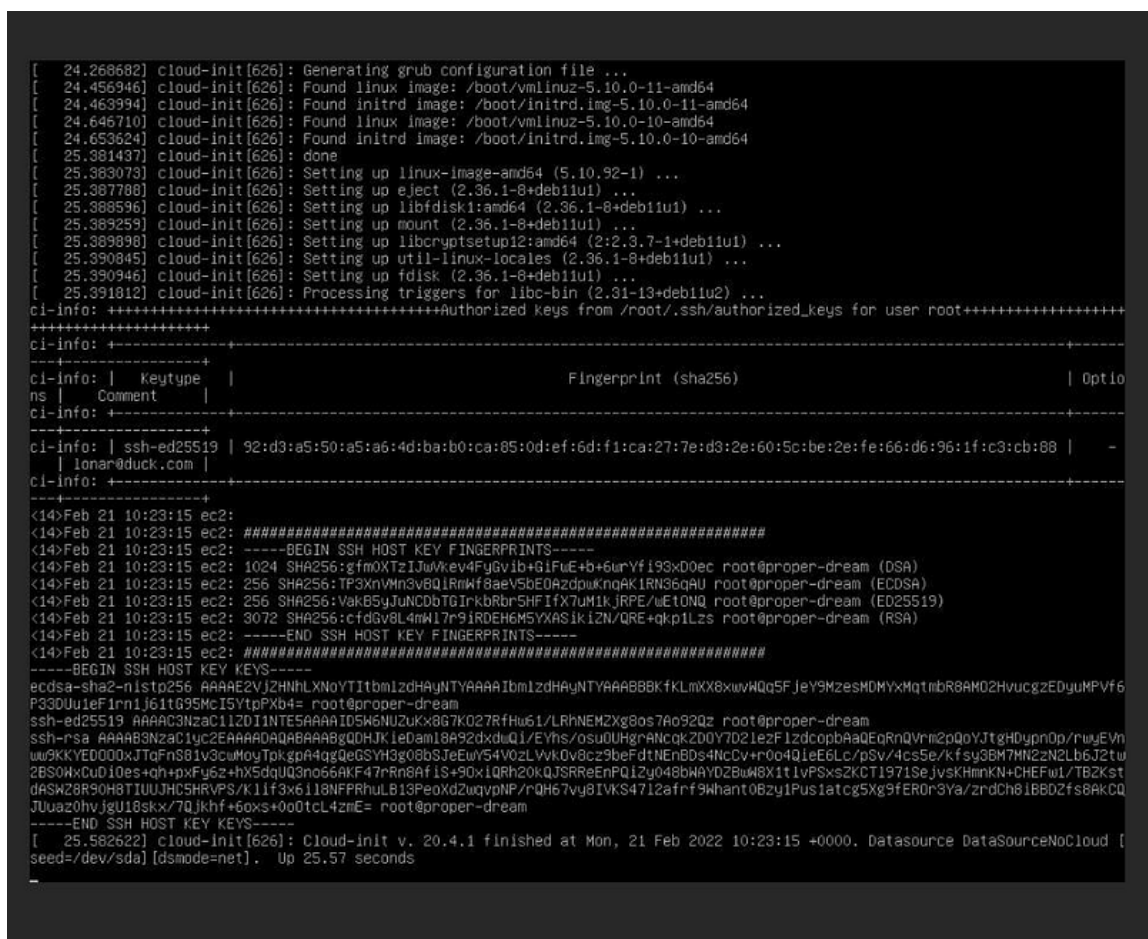
```
($vfcli-ctrl admin:ip-restrict addip your_ip_address
```

and enable the IP restriction

```
($vfcli-ctrl admin:ip-restrict enable
```



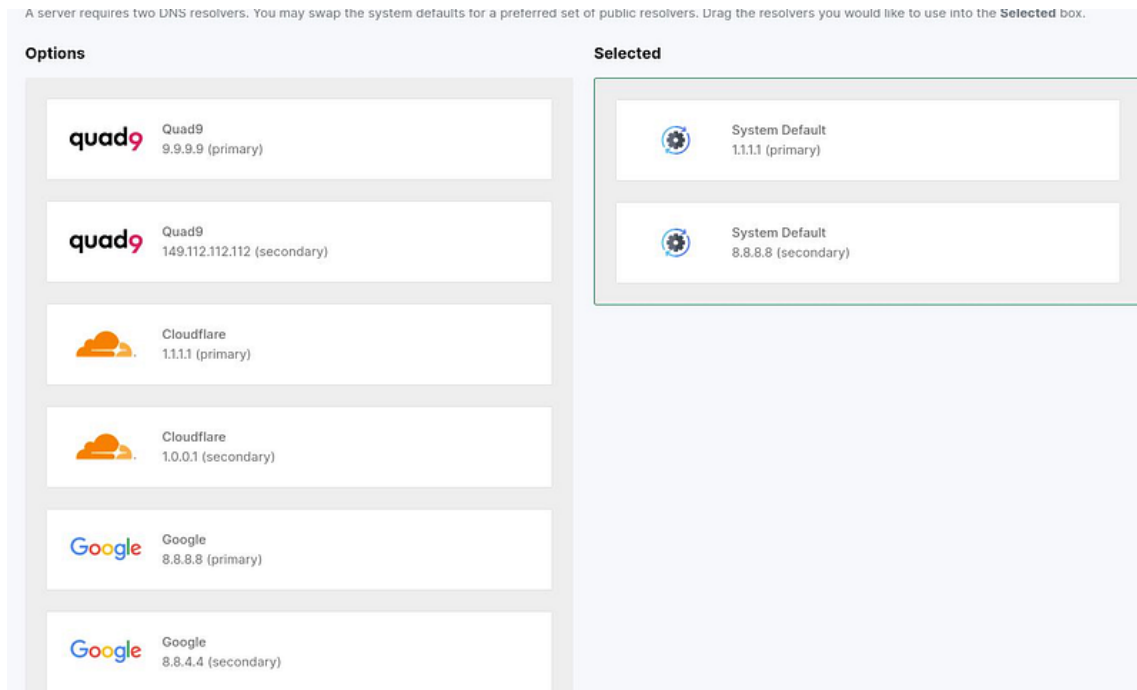
VNC access via VirtFusion



Configuring DNS and Adding reverse DNS

Choosing the DNS provider is quite easy- you can opt for the

defaults or select from one of the available options seen in the image below.



Adding reverse DNS is pretty easy using the graphical interface, as seen in the image below (image source: VirtFusion)

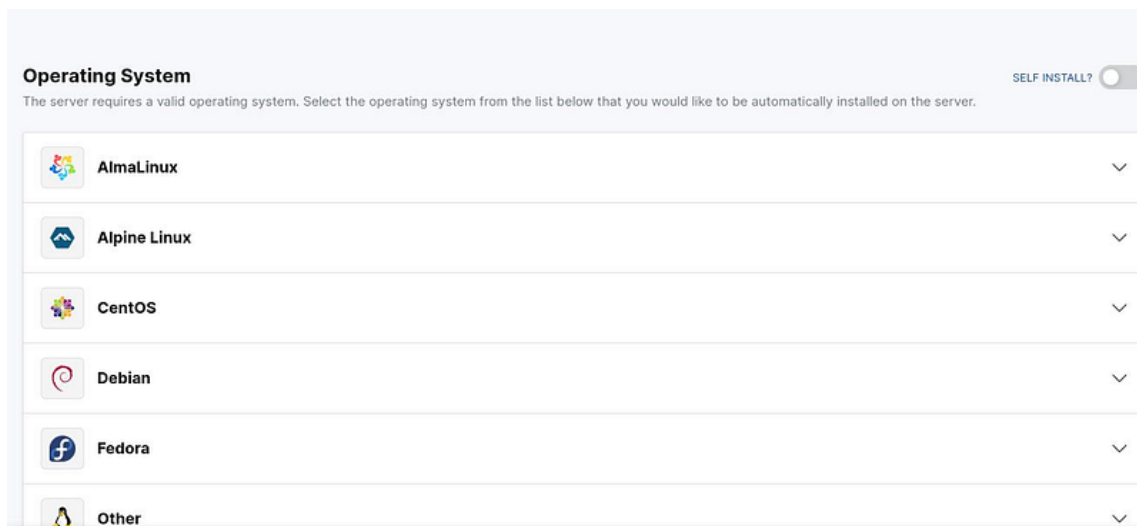


Server Setup...

Name

The server name allows you to easily identify the server under your account. If the server requires a valid hostname, you should set the hostname here.

[Random Name?](#)



Wrapping up: First Impressions as an end user of this Server Panel

I wrote to Phil the developer of VirtFusion, even though I am most likely not the target customer for this product, the following are the things I liked:

- Interface is clean, the panel is fast to load and responsive (the other server panel with the name also starting with “V”... take note)
- Short learning curve, menu is rather intuitive.
- Server setup to configuration took me less than 10 minutes- including the time taken for the screenshots. Indeed, the images that you see in this post (except the one or two images borrowed from VirtFusion site) are taken by yours truly during the server setup.

Phil did confirm that the panel was designed with the end user in mind (that would be their customer’s customer in many most cases). Which is awesome. It had taken me nearly half an hour just to explore all the options in the other panel starting with V. Most of the time was spent in waiting for the panel to load. My objective to state this is not out of criticism or a comparison, or a “A is better than B”. But from a first time user’s perspective,

these details matter. And for that, I believe that VirtFusion is on the right track. Wishing the development team (and early adopters) the best!