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Cisco VM-FEX Basic Troubleshooting Guide in VMware ESX Environment

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Introduction

Cisco Virtual Machine Fabric Extender (VM-FEX) is a Cisco technology that addresses management and performance concerns in a data center by unifying physical and virtual switch management. The Cisco VM-FEX collapses virtual and physical networking into a single infrastructure. This unified infrastructure enables data center administrators to provision, configure, manage, monitor, and diagnose virtual machine network traffic and bare metal network traffic.

The Cisco VM-FEX significantly reduces the number of network management points, enabling both physical and virtual network traffic to be treated in a consistent policy driven manner.

The VM-FEX software extends Cisco fabric extender technology to the virtual machine with the following capabilities:

- · Each virtual machine includes a dedicated interface on the parent switch
- All virtual machine traffic is sent directly to the dedicated interface on the switch
- · The software-based switch in the hypervisor is eliminated



Figure 1. Extension of Fabric Extender technology with Fabric interconnects using VM-FEX

The Figure 1 shows the extension of Fabric Extender technology with Fabric interconnects using VM-FEX. The Cisco Virtual Machine Fabric Extender (VM-FEX) technology extends Cisco Fabric Extender technology all the way to the virtual machine. Each virtual machine gets a dedicated interface on the parent switch (virtual Ethernet port). All virtual machine traffic is sent directly to the dedicated interface on the switch. VM-FEX eliminates the software based switch within the hypervisor by providing individual virtual machine virtual ports on the physical network switch. Virtual machine traffic is sent directly to the upstream physical network switch, which takes full responsibility for virtual machine switching and policy enforcement. This approach leads to consistent treatment for all network traffic, virtual or physical. VM-FEX consolidates virtual and physical switching layers into a single layer and reduces the number of network management points by an order of magnitude. The following are the benefits of VM-FEX:

Simplicity

- One infrastructure for virtual and physical resource provisioning, management, monitoring and troubleshooting
- · Consistent features, performance and management for virtual and physical infrastructure
- Robustness
 - · Programmability, ability to re-number VLANs without disruptive changes
 - Trouble shooting & Traffic engineering VM traffic from the physical network
- Performance
 - · VMDirectPath with vMotion provides near bare metal I/O performance
 - Line rate traffic to the virtual machine

UCS VM-FEX Basic Troubleshooting

The document covers the basic troubleshooting methods to be followed in the VM-FEX DVS environment.

Troubleshooting

ESX Host Side

This section explains the method to check the VM-FEX switch status on ESX Host:

Step 1. Check the VEM switch status on the ESX host using the following command.

```
~ # vem status -v
Package vssnet-esxmn-ga-release
Version 4.2.1.1.4.1.0-3.0.4
Build 4
Date Thu Aug 25 10:47:10 PDT 2011
Number of PassThru NICs are 15
VEM modules are loaded
DVS Name
              Num Ports Used Ports Configured Ports MTU
                                                              Uplinks
DVS-PTS-VNFEX
               256
                           17
                                       256
                                                        1500 vmnic0,vmnic1
Number of PassThru NICs are 15
```

Step 2. Check if the VEM Module is loaded by the ESX Kernel using the following command.

 # vmkload_mod -1
 grep
 vem

 vem-v132-svs-mux
 12
 32

 vem-v132-pts
 1
 144

Step 3. You can view information on VM-FEX maximum number of ports, connectivity status, used ports IDs which are mapped toVirtual Machines Dynamic vNIC ,vmkernel etc., using the following command.

esxcfg-vswitch -1					
Switch Name	Num Ports	Used Ports	Configured Ports	MTU Upli	nks
vSwitch0	128	2	128	1500	
PortGroup Name	VLAN ID	Used Ports	Uplinks		
Service Console	0	0			
VM Network Ports Configured	0 Ports MTU	0 Uplinks	DVS Name	Num Ports	Used
UPT_DVS	256	5	256 1500	vmnic0,vmr	nicl
DVDV Port ID 1500	In	Use Cli	ent		
1516	0				

1523	1	vmnicl
1539	1	vmnic0
1	1	vmk0
1500	1	Windows2K8R2 ethernet0

Step 4. Check the Virtual Machine's Dynamic vNIC network connectivity issues from the ESX host side using the following command. The commands and figures help you to narrow down the network connectivity issues.

The following command allows you to get the login details from the vmkernel log file. Figure 2 shows the UCS Graphic User Interface (GUI) and Figure 3 shows the vCenter GUI. These figures show the DV Port ID 1500 to which the Virtual Machine is connected.

```
~ # cat /var/log/vmkernel.log | grep 1500 | grep hardPts
2011-10-03T09:57:03.314Z cpu12:3875)hardPts: hard_niv_dev_authenticate:527: Auth
STARTED on devName vf_vmnic0 08:00.2 MAC: 00:0c:29:b7:8c:95 port_profile:
dvportgroup-44 name: Windows2K8R2 ethernet0 portID: 0x2000011 dvportname: 1500
dvsname: 59 63 21 5$
2011-10-03T09:57:03.314Z cpu12:3875)hardPts: hard_niv_dump_provinfo:377: String:
1500
```

Figure 2. UCS Manager showing the Virtual Machine and the DV Port ID 1500 connectivity

s 5 64		Image: Second secon	nes + 🤭 Host Server 1/7 + Virtual Machines + 🤭 Virtual M	lachine Windows2K8R2 + 📲 vNIC 1500
Filter:	ALL T	Name	Status	Fabric ID
0		-1 Vif 32769	Online	A
All		-I VIF 32769	Online	B
	-Test r Test er 1/7	(SR2		

Figure 3. vCenter showing the DV Port ID 1500 connectivity

WIN-8VQE2TIAGR2 Test VS-PTS Switch		ed Summary		Configuration Virtual M	achines Hos	ts 🗸 Tasks & Events 🗸 Alar	ms Permission		
DVS-PTS-VNFEX uplink-pg-DVS-P deleted-pg-DVS-	-	t refresh: 00:10							Port ID
🚨 Public	Port ID	Name	Connectee	Runtime MAC add	Port group	DirectPath I/O G 🤝	State	VLAN ID	Time
🤶 VM Network	1500		Windows2K8R2	00:0c:29:b7:8c:95	Public	Active	📋 Link Up	VLAN access : 0	

The following command allows you to get the login details from the vmkernel log file. Figure 4 shows the UCS Graphic User Interface (GUI) and Figure 5 shows the vCenter GUI. These figures show the DV Port ID 1500 to which the Virtual Machine is connected.

```
~ # cat /var/log/vmkernel.log | grep 1500
2011-10-03T10:04:01.239Z cpu6:2093)Net: 2191: dissociate dvPort 1500 from port
0x2000011
```



Figure 4. The MAC address status after dissociation with the VM-FEX DV Port ID 1500

Figure 5. DirectPath I/O status after the dissociation of MAC address with the VM-FEX DV Port ID 1500

WIN-8VQE2TIAGR2 Ent Test Elt DV5-PT5 Switch	DVS-PTS-VN Getting Start		Networks Ports Configurat	on Virtual Machines Hosts	Tasks & Events Ala	rms Permissions			
DVS-PTS-VINFEX	Time since las	t refresh: 00:24						Start	Monito
uplink-pg-DVS-P' g deleted-pg-DVS-							Port ID c	ontains: •	
eleted-pg-DVS-	Port ID	Name	Connectee	Runtime MAC address	Port group	DirectPath I/O Gen. 2	State	VLAN ID	1
👷 VM Network	1485	**			uplink-pg-DVS-PTS	**		-	
	1486	**		**	uplink-pg-DVS-PTS	**		**	03
	1487	**		**	uplink-pg-DVS-PTS				55
	1488				uplink-pg-DVS-PTS		-		1
	1489				uplink-pg-DVS-PTS				- 22
	1490				uplink-pg-DVS-PTS	**	**	**	- 29
	1491	**		**	uplink-pg-DVS-PTS	**	**	**	
	1492			**	uplink-pg-DVS-PTS	**	**	**	1.1
	1493	**	**		uplink-pg-DVS-PTS	**	**	141	3
	1494	-		**	uplink-pg-DVS-PTS				- 24
	1495				uplink-pg-DVS-PTS				1
	1496				uplink-pg-DVS-PTS	-			22
	1497	**		**	uplink-pg-DVS-PTS	**	**		29
	1498				uplink-pg-DVS-PTS				-
	1499				uplink-pg-DVS-PTS	**		**	
	1500		Windows2K8R2		Public	Inactive	Link Down	VLAN access : 0	

The following command allows you to get the login details from the vmkernel log file.

```
~ # cat /var/log/vmkernel.log | grep 1500
```

```
2011-10-03T10:12:52.931Z cpu4:4687)hardPts: hard_niv_dev_authenticate:527: Auth

STARTED on devName vf_vmnic0 08:00.2 MAC: 00:0c:29:b7:8c:95 port_profile:

dvportgroup-44 name: Windows2K8R2 ethernet0 portID: 0x2000012 dvportname: 1500

dvsname: 59 63 21 50$

2011-10-03T10:12:52.931Z cpu4:4687)hardPts: hard_niv_dump_provinfo:377: String:

1500 2011-10-

03T10:12:52.939Z cpu4:4687)NetPort: 2600: resuming traffic on DV port 1500
```

UCS VM-FEX / vCenter View

The UCS VM tab allows you to view all available VM-FEX switches defined in the Fabric Interconnect and also allows you to define port profiles with network settings. You can apply the port profiles to multiple VM-FEX switches running on the Fabric Interconnect. The UCS VM tab provides a logical view of all virtual machines' dynamic vNICs with the corresponding VM-FEX DV Port ID 1500 connectivity information.





To support automatic Fabric based failover on Virtual Machine Dynamic vNICs, the VM-FEX creates active and standby Virtual Interfaces (VIF). These interfaces are placed on Fabric Interconnect A and B. The corresponding Dynamic port names of the virtual interfaces are displayed on the UCS service profile. Figure 7 shows the mapping information.

lame	Adapter Port	FEX Host Port	FEX Network Port	FI Server Port	VNIC	FI Uplink	Link Sta
-I Path 1	2/2	right/7	right/3	B/1/3			
					eth0	unpinned	Up
					eth1	unpinned	Up
- I Virtual Circuit 1331					dynamic-prot-001	unpinned	Unknown
					dynamic-prot-002	unpinned	Unknowr
					dynamic-prot-003	unpinned	Unknowr
-I Virtual Circuit 1336					dynamic-prot-004	unpinned	Unknown
					dynamic-prot-005	unpinned	Unknown
-I Virtual Circuit 1340					dynamic-prot-006	unpinned	Unknowr
					dynamic-prot-007	unpinned	Unknow
-I Virtual Circuit 1344					dynamic-prot-008	unpinned	Unknow
-II Virtual Circuit 134					dynamic-prot-009	unpinned	Unknow
-I Virtual Circuit 1348					dynamic-prot-010	unpinned	Unknowr
					dynamic-prot-011	unpinned	Unknowr
-I Virtual Circuit 1352					dynamic-prot-012	unpinned	Unknowr
					dynamic-prot-013	unpinned	Unknowr
					dynamic-prot-014	unpinned	Unknowr
	1				dynamic-prot-015	unpinned	Unknowr
-I Path 1	/1	left/7	left/3	A/1/3			
Virtual Circuit 1326	1	1012787 • 000			eth0	A/1/19	Up
-II Virtual Circuit 1329					eth1	A/1/19	Up
Virtual Circuit 1330					dynamic-prot-001	unpinned	Unknown
	11				dynamic-prot-002	unpinned	Unknowr
-I Virtual Circuit 1334					dynamic-prot-003	unpinned	Unknowr
-I Virtual Circuit 1337					dynamic-prot-004	unpinned	Unknowr
					dynamic-prot-005	unpinned	Unknowr
					dynamic-prot-006	unpinned	Unknowr
					dynamic-prot-007	unpinned	Unknow
-I Virtual Circuit 1345					dynamic-prot-008	unpinned	Unknowr
ilt Summary			Y Options 🕢 🕕 📥 Pr			ne Windowe2K8D2	* - VAUC 1
5 64 8	7		IFs Faults Events Statisti			ne windowszkokz	VILC 1
ipment Servers LAN SAN VM	Admin			G			
Filter: All 💌		🔍 Alter 🛥 Export 👸	8 Print				
		Name		Status			Fabric
		-1 Vif 32769 -1 Vif 32769		Online			AB
All Port Profiles Port Profiles Port Profile Public Port Profile Datacenter Test Folders Polders Polde		- W 32/09		PO MILES			b

Figure 7. Mapping information of VIF with Dynamic vNICs

The UCS CLI view provides information on Virtual Interface of Virtual Machine Dynamic vNIC mapping to the UCS vEthernet Interface. You can verify the mapping information using the following commands.

```
Fabric-Cusl-A /system/vm-mgmt/vmware/virtual-machine # show vnic
vNIC:
Name Status MAC Address
```

name	blacus	MAC AUGI EBB
1501	Online	00:50:56:A1:6A:56

Fabric-Cus1-A /system/vm-mgmt # show virtual-machine Virtual Machine:

UUID: 520ba8c8-a717-54a4-8827-942a97419f3c

Name: Windows2K8R2

Service Profile: org-root/ls-ESX-Blade7-ESX

Server: sys/chassis-1/blade-7

```
Status: Online
```

```
Fabric-Cusl-A /system/vm-mgmt # scope virtual-machine 520ba8c8-a717-54a4-8827-
942a97419f3c
```

```
Fabric-Cusl-A /system/vm-mgmt/vmware/virtual-machine # show detail expand
Virtual Machine:
    UUID: 520ba8c8-a717-54a4-8827-942a97419f3c
    Name: Windows2K8R2
    Service Profile: org-root/ls-ESX-Blade7-ESX
    Server: sys/chassis-1/blade-7
    hv-type: Esx
    Status: Online
    Description:
 vNIC:
   Name: 1501
    Status: Online
    MAC Address: 00:50:56:A1:6A:56
    Profile Name: Public
    Virtual Adapter:
    Vnic Dn:
    Current Task:
 VIF:
    Vif Id: 32771
    Adapter Virtual If ID: 1330
    Status: Online
    Phys Fabric ID: A
    linkState: Up
    operState: Active
    Phys Border Card ID: 1
    Phys Border DV Port ID 1500: 19
    Vif Id: 32771
    Adapter Virtual If ID: 1331
    Status: Online
    Phys Fabric ID: B
    linkState: Up
    operState: Active
    Phys Border Card ID: 1
    Phys Border DV Port ID 1500: 19
Fabric-Cus1-A(nxos)# sh mac address-table vlan 1 | grep 0050.56a1.6a56
* 1
           0050.56a1.6a56
                             static
                                                  F
                                                        F Veth32771
                                       0
```

The VMWare vCenter Networking tab displays all the available VM-FEX DVS switches from different Data Centers. The tab also provides the corresponding Virtual Machine's Dynamic vNIC DV Port ID 1500 which is a part of VM-FEX DVS switches across Data Center.

Figure 8. Availability of VM-FEX DVS switches

File Edit View Inventory Administra								
WIN-8VQE2TIAGR2 Test VS-PTS Switch Model DVS-PTS-VNFEX Multi	Time since last rel	Summary	Networks Ports	Configuration Virtu	ual Machines 🗸 H	Tasks & Events	Alarms Permis	ssions
eleted-pg-DVS-	Port ID	Name	Connectee	Runtime MAC add	Port group 🧭	DirectPath I/O Gen. 2	State	VLAN ID
👷 VM Network	1500	-	Windows2K8R2	00:0c:29:b7:8c:95	Public	Active	📋 Link Up	VLAN access : 0

ESX Host / Cisco VIC / UCS VM-FEX Mapping

This section describes the method to check the mapping from ESX host to Cisco VIC and displays the entire mapping of UCS VM-FEX:

ESX Host Vmkernel log

The Vmkernel in ESX Host logs the control work flow of the Virtual Machine Dynamic vNIC's association and disassociation during boot and shutdown of the Virtual Machine. ESX Host is a part of the VM-FEX DVS switch, running within the Fabric Interconnect.

The following example shows the method to check the DV Port ID 1500 connected to the Dynamic vNIC, the VIF IDs with their paths and the DV Port ID 1500s on both the Fabric Interconnects A and B associated with the paths.

~ # cat /var/log/vmkernel.log | grep 1500 | grep hardPts

2011-10-03T09:57:03.314Z cpu12:3875)hardPts: hard_niv_dev_authenticate:527: Auth STARTED on devName vf_vmnic0 08:00.2 MAC: 00:0c:29:b7:8c:95 port_profile: dvportgroup-44 name: Windows2K8R2 ethernet0 portID:0x2000011 dvportname: 1500 dvsname:59 63 21 5\$ 2011-10-03T09:57:03.314Z cpu12:3875)hardPts:

hard_niv_dump_provinfo:377: String:1500

In the above command, hard_niv_dev_authernticate is the control signal which does the authentication process on Dynamic vNIC vf_vmnic0 MAC Address (08:00.2). This address is assigned to the Virtual Machine MAC address (00:0c:29:b7:8c:95).

Cisco VIC Adapter

To see the corresponding Dynamic vNIC vf_vmnic0 MAC Address **08:00:2** associated with the vNIC on the adapter, you need to connect to the corresponding adapter by using the following command. In this example blade 1 is connected on chassis 2 which has the Cisco VIC adapter 1.

UCS-A# connect adapter 2/1/1

adapter 2/1/1 # connect adapter 2/1/1 (top):1# attach-mcp adapter 2/1/1 (mcp):1# vnic vif uif : bound uplink 0 or 1, =:primary, -:secondary, >:current

vnic lif vifid name type bb:dd.fstate lifstate uif ucsm idx vlanstate

```
5vnic_1 enet 08:00.0 UP 2 UP =>0 1326 187 1 UP
                    -1 1327 181 1 UP
6vnic 2 enet 08:00.1 UP 3 UP - 0 1329 186 1 UP
                     =>1 1328 180 1 UP
7vnic 3 enet pt08:00.2 UP 4 UP =>0 1330 189 1 UP
                     -1 1331 183 1 UP
adapter 1/7/1 (mcp):14# vnic 7
vnicid:7
name : vnic7
type : enet_pt
state : UP
adminst : UP
slot:0
bdf: 03:00.2
mac: 00:00:00:00:00:00
vifid : 1330
vifcookie : 1297761
uif:0
stby_vifid : 1331
profile :
stdby_profile :
```

In the above command output, devName vf_vmnic 0 08:00.2 MAC: 00:0c:29:b7:8c:95 has two VIF DV Port ID 1500s, 1330 and 1331 created on both the Fabric Interconnects. 1330 VIF ID is active and created on Fabric Interconnect A (UP =>0 1330). 1331 VIF ID is standby (stby_vifid :1331) and created on secondary Fabric Interconnect B (-1 1331).

In the output shown below, Guest VM Dynamic vNIC MAC Address 00:0c:29:b7:8c:95 (VIF ID 1330) is registered on the active Fabric Interconnect A and VIF ID 1331 is in standby and becomes active when there is a fabric failover event.

```
      Fabric-Cus1-A(nxos)# sh mac address-table address 000c.29b7.8c95

      VLAN
      MAC Address
      Type
      age
      Secure NTFY
      Ports

      -----+
      -----+
      -----+
      -----+
      -----+

      * 1
      000c.29b7.8c95
      static
      0
      F
      F
      Veth32769
```

Error Messages

This section provides error messages that are seen when enabling VMDirectPathmode on the Dynamic vNICs. The Table 1 gives the section wise information on these errors.

Table 1.Error Messages

Error Messages	Sections
"The NIC does not support DirectPath I/O Gen. 2."	Refer to section Guest Virtual Machine Network Adapter Type on page 13
"The hardware of the virtual machine's host does not support DirectPath I/O Gen. 2. "The NIC is disabled or disconnected which prevents it participating in DirectPath I/O Gen. 2."	Refer to section ESX Host BIOS Setting for enabling VMDirectPath on page 14
"To activate DirectPath I/O Gen. 2, go to the Resources tab and select Memory Settings to reserve all guest memory"	Refer to section ESX Guest VM Memory Reservation Setting on page 16
"The vSphere distributed switch to which the NIC's port belongs does not support DirectPath I/O Gen. 2." "DirectPath I/O is unavailable due to insufficient host interrupt vectors."	Refer to section Insufficient Resources in Dynamic Adapter Configuration on page 17
"The NIC has features enabled (For example INT-x or PXE boot) that prevent it from partcipating in DirectPath IO " $\!\!$	Refer to section ESX Guest VM PXE Operation on page 19

VM-FEX with VMDirectPath Basic Prerequisites

You need to follow the checklist before enabling High Performance on the Port profile. Enabling High Performance turns on VMDirectPath (UPT) mode on the Dynamic vNICs which are part of Virtual Machines.

If you cannot set the VMDirectPath to active state and get error as explicitly disabled NIC's ports as shown in Figure 9, then there can be several causes as described below:

Figure 9. Properties windows to check the DirectPath I/O status

VML - Virtual Machine Prop Hardware Options Resources	the state of the s	Virtual Machine Version: 8
Show All Devices	Add Remove	Device Status
Hardware Har	Summary 1024 MB 1 Video card Restricted Paravirtual Virtual Disk: [] Jusr/Bi/vmware/isol	Connect at power on Adapter Type Current adapter: VMD/NET 3 MAC Address D0:50:56:68:129:14 G. Automatic. C. Marcal
 Network adapter 1 Floppy drive 1 	UPT_HIPerf (UPT_DVS), Client Device	DirectPath I/O Status: Inactive
		Network Connection MirectPath I/O Network label: General UPT_MPerf (UPT_DVS) Status Port: 3420 Configuration Issues Smi DirectPath I/O has been explicitly disabled for the NIC's port.

rdware Options Resources Pro	files vServices	Virtual Machine Version:
Show All Devices	Add Remove	Connected Connect at power on
Memory CPUs Video card VMCI device SCSI controller 0 Hard disk 1 CD/DVD drive 1 Floppy drive 1 Network adapter 3	32768 MB 4 Video card Restricted LSI Logic SAS Virtual Disk Client Device Client Device Client Device Mgmt (PTS-VC1), Port:	Adapter Type Current adapter: VMXNET 3 MAC Address 00:50:56:81:6c:ab C Manual DirectPath I/O Gen. 2 Status: Inactive 1
		To activate DirectPath I/O Gen. 2, go to the Resources tab and select Memory Settings to reserve all guest memory. Network Connection Network label: Mgmt (PTS-VC1) Port: 2023 Switch to advanced settings

Figure 10. Virtual Machine properties window to activate DirectPath I/O

Guest Virtual Machine OS and VMXNET3 supported Versions

The following table shows the VMXNET3 driver versions to support VMDirectPath mode for different Guest Virtual Machine Operating Systems.

Table 2. VMXNET3 driver versions to support VMDirectP

SL No	Guest OS	VMXNET3 Driver version
1	Windows 2008 SP2	1.2.22.0
2	Windows 2008 R2	1.2.22.0
3	RHEL 6.0	1.0.14.0-k
4	SLES11 SP1	1.0.14.0-k
5	SLES11	1.0.36.0

Guest Virtual Machine Network Adapter Type

VM-FEX VMDirectPath mode is enabled and operational only if the Guest Virtual Machine is loaded with VMXNET 3 emulated Network driver. By default the UPT mode will be turned off.

Ensure that when you are adding a Network Adapter to a Virtual Machine in vCenter, the adapter type of the selected adapter is VMXNET 3. Also, you need to ensure that the VMXNET 3 driver is loaded on the Guest Virtual machine by using the following command:

lsmod | grep vmxnet3

lardware Options Resources	Profiles vServices	Virtual Machine Version:
Show All Devices	Add Remove	Device Status Connected
Hardware	Summary	Connect at power on
Memory CPUs Video card VMCI device SCSI controller 0 Hard disk 1 CD/DVD drive 1	1024 MB 1 Video card Restricted Paravirtual Virtual Disk [UPT-Datastore] rhel-se	Adapter Type Current adapter: VMXNET 3 MAC Address 00:50:56:3F:0A:10 C Automatic C Manual
😁 Network adapter 1	Perf-PP (Perf-SW), Port:	
Floppy drive 1	Client Device	DirectPath I/O Gen. 2 Status: Active 1 Network Connection Network label:
		Perf-PP (Perf-SW)
		Port: 1732 Switch to advanced settings

Figure 11. Virtual Machine properties window showing the current adapter in use

When the adapter attached to the Virtual Machine is not VMXNET3, Dynamic vNIC with VMDirectPathMode cannot be enabled. Click the icon ••• to view the error message as shown in the Figure 12.

Figure 12. VM properties window showing the error message

	-Device Status		
	Connected		
	Connect at power	on	
\langle	Adapter Type Current adapter:	E1000	
	MAC Address		
	C Automatic	🖸 Manual	
	-DirectPath I/O Gen. 2		
	Status:	Not supported (🕄	
Direc	Path 1/0 Gen. 2		×
Gene	eral		
St	atus	Not supported	
Conf	iguration Issues		
4	The NIC does not s	upport DirectPath I/O Gen. 2.	

ESX Host BIOS Setting for enabling VMDirectPath

To set VMDirectPath mode in VM-FEX, you need to enable Intel VT-D in the BIOS. When Intel VT-D is enabled, the status of Direct IO on Virtual machine properties page changes to active.

You can enable Virtualization Technology (VT) in the BIOS policy as shown in Figure 13.





When the Intel VT-D feature is disabled in the ESX host Server, the VMDirectPathMode cannot be enabled. Click the icon
to view the error message as shown in the Figure 14.

L.	Device Status	
	Connected	
	Connect at power on	
r	Adapter Type	
	Current adapter:	VMXNET 3
	MAC Address	
	00:50:56:84:51:be	
	Automatic C	Manual
	DirectPath I/O Gen. 2	Inactive 📵
irectPa	ath 1/0 Gen. 2	
Genera	ıl	
Statu	15	Inactive
Configu	ration Issues	
٠	The NIC is disabled or dis DirectPath I/O Gen. 2.	connected which prevents it participating in
		t does not support DirectPath I/O Gen. 2.

Figure 14. VM properties window showing the error message

ESX Guest VM Memory Reservation Setting

To enable VM-FEX VMDirectPath mode on Guest VMs, you need to reserve memory in advance in the VM configuration setting. The Figure 15 shows the guest memory reservation details.



VM1 - Virtual Machin	iources Profiles VServices			Virtual Machine Version: 8
Advanced CPU Advanced CPU Advanced Memory	0 MHz 0 MHz 0 MHz 0 MB Normal HT Sharing: Any NUMA Nodes: 2	Shares: Reservation: Limit:	In the second se	 ✓ 10240 ↔ ✓ 1024 ↔ ✓ MB ✓ 1024 ↔ ✓ MB
Help				OK Cancel

When there is no memory reserved for the virtual machine, the VMDirectPathMode cannot be enabled.

Click the icon ¹ to view the error message as shown in the Figure 16.

ardware Options Resources	Profiles VServices	Virtual Machine Version:
Show All Devices	Add Remove	Connected Connect at power on
Memory CPUs Video card VMCI device SCSI controller 0 Hard disk 1 CD/DVD drive 1 Floppy drive 1 Network adapter 3	32768 MB 4 Video card Restricted LSI Logic SAS Virtual Disk Client Device Client Device Mgmt (PTS-VC1), Port:	Adapter Type Current adapter: VMXNET 3 MAC Address 00:50:56:81:6c:ab C Automatic C Manual DirectPath I/O Gen. 2 Status: Inactive 1 To activate DirectPath I/O Gen. 2, go to the Resources tab and select Memory Settings to reserve all guest memory.
		Network Connection Network label: Mgmt (PTS-VC1) Port: 2023 Switch to advanced settings

Figure 16. VM properties window showing the error message

Insufficient Resources in Dynamic Adapter Configuration

• Interrupts

VMDirectPath mode by default Interrupt mode is set to MSI-X which consumes 4 Interrupts vectors from ESX Host Interrupt pool of 128 maximum limit, if there is a scenario where ESX host reports Interrupt pool is full and cannot allocate any interrupt vectors to any Virtual Machines' to change to VMDirectPath mode from emulated mode then will fail and reports in active status in vCenter on Virtual Machine network properties pane. The Figure 17 shows the default Interrupt values.

Transmit/Receive/Completion Queues

To enable VMDirectPath mode with RSS/multi-queue, you need to ensure that the adapter policy is configured accordingly. The values can be set in Eth Adapter Policy VMWare PassThru and in VMXNET3 driver. The values for these queues must meet the following criteria:

- The values set for Transmit Queues (TQs) in VMXNET3 should be greater than the values set for TQs in Eth Adapter Policy VMWare PassThru (largest VMXNET3.NumTQs on host <= dynamicPolicy.NumTQs).
- The values set for Recieve Queues (RQs) in VMXNET3 should be greater than the values set for RQs in Eth Adapter Policy VMWare PassThru (largest VMXNET3.NumRQs on host <= dynamicPolicy.NumRQs).
- The values set for Transmit Queues (CQs) in VMXNET3 should be greater than the values set for CQs in Eth Adapter Policy VMWare PassThru (largest VMXNET3.NumCQs on host <= dynamicPolicy.NumCQs).

- The values set for Interrupts (INTRs) in VMXNET3 should be greater than the values set for INTRs in Eth Adapter Policy VMWare PassThru (largest VMXNET3.NumINTRs on host <= dynamicPolicy.NumINTRs)
- **Note:** If any one of these criterias are not met, then the VMDirectPath will remain in inactive mode.



Actions Properties	
E S Adapter Policies E Delete Name: VMWarePassThru	
- S Eth Adapter Policy Linux	(Alier)
Eth Adapter Policy VMware	NIC)
Steph Adapter Policy VMWarePassThru	
-S Eth Adapter Policy Windows S Eth Adapter Policy default	-
CAdapter Policy Unix Ring Size: [256 [64-4096]	
S FC Adapter Policy VMWare	
-S FC Adapter Policy Windows Receive Queues: 4 [1-256]	
FC Adapter Policy default Ring Size: 512 [64-4096]	
SCSI Adapter Policy default	
Completion Queues: 5 [1-512]	
Interrupts: 6 [1-514]	
mendes lo [r-sr4]	
Options	8
Transmit Checksum Offload: C Disabled © Enabled	
Receive Checksum Offload: C Disabled C Enabled	
TCP Segmentation Offload: C Disabled C Enabled	
TCP Large Receive Offload: C Disabled @ Enabled	
Receive Side Scaling (RSS): C Disabled @ Enabled	
Failback Timeout (Seconds): 5 [0-600]	
Interrupt Mode: Msi X C Msi C Intx	
Interrupt Coalescing Type: Min C Idle	_
Interrupt Timer (us): 125 [0-65535]	-

Guest OS: Microsoft Windows Server VM Version: 7 CPU: 2 vCPU Memory: 4096 MB Memory: 52.95 MB VM were Tools: 0ut of date IP Addresses: 119.25, 180.25	Conversion C			Vitual Machine Version: 7		
Memory Overhead: 52.95 MB VMware Tools: Out of date	Show All Devices		Device Status	recual machine Version: 7		
DNS Name: WIIN-OQ212ID4VMJ EVC Mode: N/A State: Powered on Host: 172.25.160.107 Adthe Tasks: VSphere HA Protection: ② N/A C Commands	Hardware Memory CrUs Wideo card Wideo card Wideo card Wideo card SCS1 controller 0 Hind dick 1 CD/DVD drive 1 Hatwark adapter 1 Hatwark adapter 1	Add Remove Summary 4006 MB 2 Video card Restricted LSI Logic SAS Vidnad Disk Client Device Normal (Pass1), Port: 1 Client Device	Connect at power on Adapter Type Connect at apower on Adapter Type Current adapter: VM0/Address D05/50/56/8-80/0/F @ Automatic Cr Minnal DirectPath I/O Gen. 2 Status: Inactive	0		
Suspend Suspend Suspend Suspend CRestat Gast Edit Settings Core Concile Minigrate Core to New Virtual Machine Notes: Notes:			Network Connection Network label: Normal (Paes1) Port: 1565 Se	DirectPath/J0 Gen. 2 General Status Configuration Issues The v5phere distribut not support DirectPat	Inactive ted switch to which the NIIC's port belon b I/O Gen. 2.	gs does

Figure 18. VM properties window showing the error message

When the Dynamic vNIC does not have sufficient resources like Write Queues (WQs), Receive Queues (RQs), Completion Queues (CQs), and intrrupts (intrs) to support VMDirectPathMode, you will get an error message as shown in the Figure 18.

Click the icon ¹ to view the error message as shown in the Figure 18.

ESX Guest VM PXE Operation

VMDirectPath IO will be in "Active" on Guest VMs only after Virtual Machine PXE install and boot operatrions are completed with correct VMXNET3 Driver is loaded.

For Example: RHEL 6.0 with VMXNET3 driver version 1.0.14.0-k, default Virtual Machine setting on vSphere 5 may encounter this behavior during PXE installition or boot operation.

For more detail refer Guest Operating System Installtion Guide http://partnerweb.vmware.com/GOSIG/home.html

The Figure 19 shows VMDirectPath IO configuration error message during the Guest VM PXE installation or the boot phase. Click the icon • to view the error message as shown in the Figure 19.

🚰 RHEL6.0 - Virtual Machine	Properties		_ 🗆 X	
Hardware Options Resources	Profiles VServices		Virtual Machine Version: 8	
Show All Devices	Add Remove	Connected		
Hardware	Summary	Connect at power on		
Memory CPUs Video card Video card Video card SCSI controller 0 Hard disk 1 CD/DVD drive 1 Network adapter 1 GF Floppy drive 1	2048 MB I Video card Restricted Paravirtual Virtual Disk Client Device Public (FlexPod_DVS_5 Client Device	Adapter Type Current adapter: WMXN MAC Address 00:50:56:85:27:8b @ Automatic Manual DirectPath I/O	d	
		Status: Inacti	ve 🛈	
		Network Connection	DirectPath I/0	×
			General	
		Public (FlexPod_DVS_Swit)	Status	Inactive
		Port: 17	Swi Onfiguration Issues The NIC has features prevent it from partici	enabled (for example, INT-x or PXE boot) that pating in DirectPath I/O.

Figure 19. VM properties window showing the error message

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