Ubuntu Offline Updates Advisory

26th April 2017

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1 Overview

In some circumstances, Ubuntu needs to be updated from a basic (for example, Ubuntu 14.04.4) installation to a more up to date LTS (for example, Ubuntu 14.04.5) at a customer site where a very slow or no internet connection is available. This document describes setting up updates using a local (on external disk) copy of the Ubuntu repositories. This documentation assumes that the 14.04.x LTS series is used, which corresponds to the short name trusty.

2 Requirements

An offline copy of the Ubuntu repository is needed. At the time of writing, this means that you need a local copy (on external disk) of the `archive.ubuntu.com` directory, which can be found at:

ims@hypnos.au.imseismology.org:/data/apt-mirror/mirror/archive.ubuntu.com

It is useful to keep your private copy of this repository up to date by a suitable rsync script, as it gets automatically updated every day, but with small daily deltas. For the purposes of this document and as example, we will assume that it resides at `/media/EXT4/archive.ubuntu.com` (where the external disk is mounted at `/media/EXT4`).

3 Configuring the Server

For the Ubuntu server which is being configured, the default `/etc/apt/sources.list` only contains the online (and potentially USB installation disk) update centers.

To temporarily switch to offline updates, move the current sources file out of the way and create a new temporary sources.list file with your update paths configured as one of the examples below.

The current three IMS supported IMS releases are:

- Ubuntu 12.04* LTS (precise)

- Ubuntu 14.04* LTS (trusty)

- Ubuntu 16.04* LTS (xenial)

To allow for offline updates, add three new update sources to your temporary sources.list file.

For our external disk path and assumption of Ubuntu 14.04.x, the following lines should be added to `/etc/apt/sources.list`:

Offline Ubuntu updates for 14.04.x (trusty), from /media/EXT4/archive.ubuntu.com

deb file:///media/EXT4/archive.ubuntu.com/ubuntu trusty main restricted universe multiverse

deb file:///media/EXT4/archive.ubuntu.com/ubuntu trusty-updates main restricted universe multiverse

deb file:///media/EXT4/archive.ubuntu.com/ubuntu trusty-security main restricted universe multiverse

If the actual mount point or path differs, it is important that it be amended in the listing above.

4   Performing Updates

If the `sources.list` file has been correctly updated, the normal update system (either graphically or using `apt-get`) should be able to resume normally, and use the additional mounted source (from your external disk) as a source of updates. Using this mechanism, it is possible to upgrade an installed Ubuntu system to the latest (14.04.x) LTS using the updates available on your offline repository.

* Remember to restore the original sources.list after updates are complete.

Change Control Record			
Date	Author	Description	Revision
2015-06-02	EL	Original document	0
2015-06-02	FC	Minor updates	1
2017-04-24	RE	Added change control records, support for 14.04 and 16.04 and minor formatting updates.	2

Table 1: Change record