How to Import/Export OVA Files in VirtualBox

One of the biggest strengths in working with virtual machines is their portability. It's great to be able to create VMs on one machine and move them to another, or you can create and clone an entire deployment of VMs. At the same time, you can find pre-configured virtual machines online that you can import in a snap and get working right away.

Oracle's VirtualBox makes all of this very simple. If you're not familiar, VirtualBox is VM management for the desktop. It's a graphical application that you can use to create and manage your virtual machines easily on your desktop or workstation. There's no complicated install or configuration necessary.

Importing an OVA

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Export Appliance	Ctrl+E	VirtualBox!	- Machine Tools	
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▼ E <u>x</u> it	machine, press the main tool b of the window.	the F1 key to get r visit <u>x.org</u> for more		

When you have VirtualBox running, locate "File" in the top menu, and click on it. Then, select "Import Appliance." VirtualBox refers to virtual machines as appliances.



A new window will pop open with a field for you to select your .ova file. Browse to the file that you'd like to import. VirtualBox will take a few seconds to read the information on the file.

Import Virtual /	Appliance	8
Appliance settings		
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Virtual System 1		
😪 Name	vm	
Description	Kali Rolling (2018.3) x64	
🗏 Guest OS Type	Other/Unknown	
СРО	4	
📕 RAM	2048 MB	
💿 DVD	✓	
🖉 USB Controller	\checkmark	v
Reinitialize the MAC add	ress of all network cards	No.
Appliance is not signed		
Restore De	efaults < <u>B</u> ack Import Cano	el

The window will shift to a table that lets you choose the settings for your soon-to-be-imported appliance. From here, you can set key features of the virtual machine, like the amount of available memory. When you're ready, finish up and let VirtualBox run the import process.

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Importing App	liance: Importing appliance	'/home/nick/Downloads/kali-linu	JX-2018 😣
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After the process completes, your VM will be ready to use.

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FileMachineImage: Settings	Help Discard	Start,		Machine Tools	Global Tools
VM Power(ed Off		Welcome to VirtualBox! The left part of this window lists a virtual machines and virtual machi groups on your computer. The list empty now because you haven't created any virtual machines yet. In order to create a new virtual machine, press the New button in the main tool bar located at the to of the window. You can press the F1 key to get instant help, or visit www.virtualbox.org for more information and latest news.	ine is	

Exporting an OVA

Exporting OVA files might be even more important than importing them. It's a great way to back up and take snapshots of your VMs. Exporting your OVAs also enables you to clone them across multiple machines or run simultaneous instances of your VMs on the same computer.

Return to the "File" menu and, this time, click "Export Appliance."



VirtualBox will open a new window with a listing of your available virtual machines. Select the VM you want to export.

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N	Storage settings			
	Please choose a filename to exp The Open Virtualization Form If you use the ovf extension, se If you use the ova extension, al Virtualization Format archive. The Oracle Public Cloud Form Each virtual disk file will be writ	at supports only veral files will be l the files will be at supports only l	ovf or ova extension written separately combined into one	/. Open
	File: /home/nick/Download			
	Format: Open Virtualization Fo	ormat 1.0		•
		< <u>B</u> ack	Next > Ca	incel
	You can press the FT k	ley to get		

The following window allows you to select the location for your exported OVA file. These files can be very large, so make sure you have enough space available in that destination drive to support the resulting file.



The next screen is the final one in the export process. It's another table, and it allows you to attach some identifying information and specifics to your file before packing it up. Generally, the name and description are the ones you'll be using, but you can certainly use the more detailed product fields for VMs that you intend to distribute.

	Oracle VM VirtualBox Manager	008
Eile Machine Hole	Export Virtual Appliance	0
	Appliance settings This is the descriptive information which will be added to the virtue appliance. You can change it by double clicking on individual lines Ing Appliance: Export appliance '/home/nick/Downlo@ Exporting to disk image 'export-disk001.vmdk' (2/2) 0%	
	 Version Description Kali Rolling (2018.3) x64 License 	-
	Restore Defaults < <u>Back</u> Export C You can press the F1 key to get instant help, or visit	Cancel -

With everything set, VirtualBox will kick off the process of rolling your VM into an OVA file. Depending on the size of the VM, it might take some time, but it takes a few minutes on average.

There you have it! You're now in full control of your OVA files. The ability to move, duplicate, and import

your virtual machines is invaluable, and it affords you much more efficient VM workflows.

Is this article useful?