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VMware Marketing Editorial Style Guide

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Revision history

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June 2009	Updated content to reflect new product names and trademarks for 2009 Added appendixes for trademarks and brand names Fixed various issues with consistency	Richard Thomchick
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Introduction

The VMware Marketing Editorial Style Guide establishes a framework for writing marketing content that effectively communicates our corporate brand and value propositions to customers, partners, prospects, and other target audiences. This guide is designed to ensure consistency, clarity, concision, and cohesion across all external communications.

This style guide can be applied to all print and electronic marketing content, including the following:

- Print collateral such as datasheets, business white papers, solution briefs, and print ads
- Web content, including user interface text, diagram labels, anchor text, and form text
- Email content such as newsletters, product announcements, and webcast invitations
- Text that appears in videos, interactive demos, and other multimedia content

This guide is divided into three sections:

- Style Topics covers practical issues that frequently arise when writing and editing for VMware, including dates and times, voice and tone, lists, punctuation, trademarking, and more.
- VMware Usage Dictionary for Selected Terms explains standard usage and spelling for technical and marketing terms commonly used at VMware.
- Web Content focuses on the specific style issues pertaining to writing and editing for [VMware.com](https://www.vmware.com) and other websites.

Additional resources

Preferred VMware supplements to this style guide include the following:

- VMware Brand Guidelines
- VMware Brand Portal
- VMware Trademark Guidelines
- VMware Best Practices for Localization

Preferred third-party supplements to this style guide include the following:

- The Chicago Manual of Style, 16th Edition
- Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary
- The Associated Press Stylebook (AP) (for press releases and other Corporate Communications materials intended for media influencers)
- Elements of Style, William Strunk Jr.; E.B. White
- Style: Toward Clarity and Grace, Joseph M. Williams

Style topics

This section covers practical issues that frequently arise when writing and editing for VMware, including dates and times, voice and tone, lists, punctuation, trademarking and more.

Abbreviations and acronyms

Most abbreviations should be spelled out on first reference.

OK to use acronyms for common terms that are familiar to the audience.

For best results, start with a PC that has at least two CPUs.

For specialized terminology and brand names, always spell out the full term on first reference and place the acronym in parens (parentheses) following first reference.

Do not use acronyms as shorthand for VMware product names. However, acronyms are acceptable to indicate names of component technologies that are included in VMware products.

Do not use acronyms if component names are trademarked.

See also [Brand names](#)

Acronyms

See [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

Active voice

Favor active-voice verbs when possible. (When a sentence has an active-voice verb, the subject of the sentence is the doer of the action.) Active voice enables readers to ascertain who is doing what. Readability scores improve whenever text uses active voice.

Avoid passive-voice verbs unless readers can easily recognize that the subject of the verb is irrelevant.

Original: Until a browser is added to the preceding list, its use with the product is not supported.

Rewrite: Until VMware adds a browser to the preceding list, you cannot rely on product support for that browser.

Addresses

Use the abbreviations “Ave.,” “Blvd,” and “St.” only with a numbered address; spell out when there is no street number; spell out other types of street names at all times.

The company is located at 1214 Storey Road.

Use postal abbreviations for states when they appear in a complete address; spell out state names in body text when standing alone or with a city with no address.

The company headquarters is in Palo Alto, California. Its address is 3830 Main St., Palo Alto, CA.

Anchor text

When embedding a hyperlink in text, otherwise referred to as adding anchor text to a link, use descriptive wording. Try to choose terms that are relevant to the destination URL. Do not use “click here.”

Original: To get a free virtualization kit, click here.

Rewrite: Get your free virtualization kit.

Link text for inline links should follow the style of the surrounding text (grammar, punctuation, capitalization).

Want to try VMware ESX before you buy it? Evaluate VMware ESX free for 30 days and discover the power of virtualization.

If the link is referenced as a separate element, use title capitalization, do not include punctuation, and write the link text in the imperative mood.

Try VMware ESX Free for 30 Days

Download Now

See also [Capitalization](#), [click here](#), [Hyperlinks](#)

Brand names

VMware brand names are essential elements of the company’s identity. Whenever possible, treat VMware brand names as adjectives, not nouns or verbs. Do not use VMware brand names in the possessive case. Do not use an acronym for a VMware brand name.

Always include “VMware” when referencing VMware brand names unless otherwise noted.

See also [Trademarks](#)

Brand voice and tone

Our voice and tone are key elements of our brand. How we use language can give people a clearer sense of who we are, what we believe in, where we’re headed as a company and—more importantly—where we’re taking people.

The VMware Brand Voice has three primary attributes:

- Unexpected: We give people new perspectives. Our voice grabs the audience’s attention and helps them explore new possibilities.
 - Clear: We’re focused on solving customer challenges. Our intelligence cuts through and gives people a transparent view of what to expect.
 - Active: We help people and businesses create their own future. Our language adds energy and momentum to demonstrate that innovative spirit.
-

Capitalization

Reserve capitalization for proper nouns (such as names of people, companies, products, protocols, and most trademarks) and for code terms that require capitalization. When in doubt, do not capitalize.

Don’t capitalize a feature name unless you must do so to match the usage in the GUI. Don’t capitalize a spelled-out term just because it is typically used as an acronym. (Although the acronym itself is likely all caps, it does not indicate that the term it represents is a proper noun.)

Capitalization styles

Capitalization styles and their names vary, so always double-check to determine what another person means by, say, “initial caps” or “title style.” Here are examples of some commonly used capitalization styles:

- ALL CAPS – Every letter in every word is capitalized. Avoid using all caps for emphasis.
- Sentence-style capitalization (or “Initial cap only”) – Only the first word of each sentence is capitalized. Appropriate for lengthy text in dialog boxes, list items, and some GUI labels.
- Title-Style Capitalization (or “Headline-Style Capitalization”) – Capitalize the first and last words and all other words except articles, conjunctions, the “to” in infinitives, and prepositions with fewer than five letters. Capitalize both words in a hyphenated compound, even if the second word is a preposition.
- Embedded caps (or “camelCaps”) – Capital letters are used in the middle of a compound word. Used in some coding languages and product names (vCenter Server, Novell NetWare).

Capitalization of titles and headings

Use title-style capitalization for document and presentation titles and headlines. Capitalize the first letter of all words in hyphenate phrases. Use sentence-style capitalization for all subheads.

Capitalization of text in Figures and tables

Capitalize text labels within diagrams and tables that writers often add to describe elements.

See also [Headings](#), [Tables](#), [Text in figures](#)

Commands

See [Key names](#)

Contractions

Contractions are OK when using an informal tone, but use only the most common forms (e.g., “can’t,” “isn’t,” and “don’t”).

If you don’t see a port, the problem could be cable connectivity or zoning.

Contractions pose a problem for translators and machine translation. Don’t use unusual contractions or any contraction formed with a proper noun.

The following sample sentence contains two contractions. Although both are acceptable and common, together they create a bit of ambiguity and might present problems to translators and people who are not native English speakers.

Original: You can’t discover LUNs with a LUN ID number that’s higher than 255.

Rewrite: You cannot discover LUNs with a LUN ID number that is higher than 255.

To emphasize a point, spell out words rather than use a contraction:

Do not rescan when a path is down.

Do not use more than 10 steps in one procedure.

See also [Localization](#)

Corporate departments

The names of VMware organizations are initial capped: Marketing, Professional Services, Human Resources, etc. However, when using these names as adjectives, do not initial cap them: “The new sales tool helped close the deal.”

Dashes and hyphens

See [em dash \(—\)](#), [en dash \(–\)](#), [hyphen \(-\)](#), [Punctuation](#)

Dates and times

Dates

OK to use standard three-letter abbreviations for months when used with a specific date with the exception of March, April, May, June, and July, which must always be spelled out.

The seminar will take place March 5, 2009.

The seminar will take place Aug. 8, 2009.

Avoid using notation that can cause confusion for international audiences.

Original: The seminar will take place on 03/05/09.

Rewrite: The seminar will take place on March 5, 2009.

Times and time zones

Use a 12-hour clock when denoting time for audiences in the United States. Use a 24-hour clock when denoting time for an international audience. If noon and midnight are to be used, they should be lowercase. Use the word “to” to separate times in copy like this: “The networking reception will be held from 9 to 11 AM.” Separate times with an en dash when they appear in schedules or event agendas.

If the audience includes both U.S. and international readers, determine which group is the primary audience and follow the corresponding rule, or consider publishing separate documents for each audience. Do not use a mix of 12-hour and 24-hour clock designations.

When using a 12-hour clock, denote morning and evening hours as “AM” and “PM.” Use standard acronyms for time zones when referencing hours of operation and other time-related information for a specific geographic region. Use the following acronyms to denote time zones in the United States during Daylight Savings Time (summer):

- Pacific Time – PDT
- Mountain Time – MDT
- Central Time – CDT
- Eastern Time – EDT

Use the following acronyms to denote time zones in the United States during Standard Time (winter):

- Pacific Time – PST
- Mountain Time – MST
- Central Time – CST
- Eastern Time – EST

See also [AM](#), [Internationalization](#), [Localization](#), [PM](#)

Figures

See [Text in figures](#)

First or second person?

First person (I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, ours) is the person speaking, and second person (you, your, yours) is the person to whom one is speaking. Writing in the second person speaks directly to your audience and helps them quickly connect the points in your copy to their personal experience. Therefore, the majority of external communications are written in the second person.

Examples:

VMware NSX enables you to manage and secure your network at a fraction of the cost of hardware-based solutions.

VMware Cloud Foundation gives you the complete set of tools you need to manage your SDDC environment.

Footnotes and endnotes

Footnotes and endnotes are used to give credit to sources of any borrowed, summarized, or paraphrased material. Footnotes are placed numerically at the foot of the same page in which direct references occur in the text. Endnotes are placed numerically at the end of the document.

Use footnotes in white papers and other collateral pieces and documents whose layout and copy areas do not limit text placement.

Use endnotes in brochures and other collateral pieces whose layout and copy areas limit text placement. Modify to cite the reference organization first (e.g., analyst firm), and then include the title, the author(s), and the publishing date. Do not include page numbers or website URLs.

1. Gartner, Inc. "Magic Quadrant for x86 Server Virtualization Infrastructure."
Thomas J. Bittman, Philip Dawson, and George J. Weiss, May 10, 2010.
-

Gender

Whenever possible, rewrite to avoid gender specificity.

OK to use "they" instead of "he or she."

Original: If the user doesn't have access to any virtual machines, he cannot see any virtual machine listings on the Virtual Machines tab.

Rewrite: If users do not have access to any virtual machines, they cannot see any virtual machine listings on the Virtual Machines tab.

Do not use a backslash (\) when referring to both genders.

Headings

Follow these guidelines when creating headings:

- Capitalize the first and last words of the heading and all other words except conjunctions, articles, the “to” in infinitives, and prepositions of fewer than five letters (unless the preposition is the first or last word of the title).
- Capitalize both words in a hyphenated compound.
- Don’t use an article to introduce a heading (with some rare exceptions).

Original: The Snapshot Manager

Rewrite: Snapshot Manager

- Do use articles elsewhere within the heading.
- Don’t place two headings together with no intervening text (i.e., don’t “stack” headings). Follow a heading of any level with at least one sentence of introduction.
- Don’t follow a heading with a note box, a figure, or a table.
- Avoid using vague titles such as “Overview.” Users might have several windows open on their screens. Instead add enough information so that readers know whether they have found the correct section: “Overview of VI Web Access,” for instance.
- Use parallel construction when possible. For instance, if most H2 headings in a section start with gerunds, try rewording so that all the H2 headings start with gerunds.

See also [Capitalization](#), [Parallel construction](#)

Hyperlinks

Avoid full line breaks when referencing URLs. If you must, break after a slash (/).

Use fully qualified URLs to avoid confusion and broken links.

Original: www.vmware.com/products

Rewrite: <http://www.vmware.com/products/index.html>

Use the “target_blank” attribute when linking to external Web pages and documents so that the destination URL appears in a new browser window.

When writing web page and email text in HTML format, avoid using the URL as the link text for hyperlinks. Instead use descriptive terms that are relevant to the destination URL.

See also [Anchor text](#)

Industry terms

Do not capitalize industry terms in general: The mobile device management market; The importance of mobile security; The trend in database management. When included in the name of a VMware product or solution, these same terms can be capitalized, as in: VMware AirWatch Mobile Device Management.

Italics

Use italics to introduce and define terms that may be new to the audience. To emphasize a word or phrase, use bold text instead.

Jargon

Avoid using obscure, specialized, or idiomatic language. Write in plain language that all readers can quickly grasp. When introducing new terminology, provide a brief definition or explanation and consider using italics on first use to mark the word as a specialized term. Avoid overusing acronyms.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

Job titles

Use lowercase for job titles that follow a name:

“...says Mary Smith, director of marketing, VMware.

However, use initial caps in pull-quote attributions and in lists of speakers or sponsors:

Mary Smith, Director of Marketing, VMware

John Doe, Training Specialist, VMware

Key names

Style for key names

- Use the standard names and short forms for keys as listed in Read Me First! Short forms (Ctrl, Del, Esc, Ins, PgDn, PgUp, PrtSc) are preferred in keyboard shortcuts.
- In general, capitalize each word in a key name (such as Alt Graph or NumLock). However, use lowercase for the names of arrow keys, the spacebar and punctuation marks (such as the down arrow, up arrow, left arrow, right arrow, spacebar, tilde, and period).
- Use Enter instead of Return.
- Don't use bold, all caps, or any special formatting for key names.
- Use the verb “press” (not “hit” or “type”) with individual key names or keyboard shortcuts.

Keyboard shortcuts

- For keyboard shortcuts in which keys are pressed simultaneously, use a plus sign with no space on either side (Ctrl+C).
- For keyboard shortcuts in which keys are pressed consecutively, use commas (Alt, F, O).
- When referring to individual letter keys, use an uppercase letter (even if the user doesn't press the Shift key). Explicitly specify the Shift key in any keyboard shortcut that requires it.

Press Ctrl+Q, Shift+8 to generate a trademark symbol.

- Do not capitalize “click” or “right-click” in keyboard shortcuts.

Shift+click

See also [press](#), [type](#)

Line breaks

Avoid full line breaks in the names of trademarks, products, and company names by inserting a nonbreaking space (Shift+Ctrl+spacebar) between words.

Original: You must purchase the VMware Infrastructure 3 product suite in order to get the VI Client software.

Rewrite: You must purchase the VMware Infrastructure 3 product suite in order to get the VI Client software.

See also [Page breaks](#), [Brand names](#)

Link text

See [Anchor text](#)

Links

See [Hyperlinks](#)

Lists

General style and usage

Correcting list style and making list items parallel take a great deal of time. Learn these fundamentals of list construction:

- Capitalize the first word in every item of every list, regardless of the list style.
- Use a consistent style for each list. You have two options:
 1. Full sentences for each item. Put a period after each item.
 2. Single words or short sentence fragments for each item. Use no closing punctuation unless they start with an imperative verb. Typically these include lists of terms or object names, lists of cross-references (without description), and lists of URLs (without description).
- Make all the items within a list grammatically parallel. For example, each item might start with a noun (typical for lists that consist solely of short fragments). More commonly, each item might start with a verb. If you use verbs, be consistent in the type of verb that you use for each item within a list. The following are typical verb (and gerund) forms:
 - Infinitives (“To analyze your data ... ”)
 - Present-tense, indicative verbs (“Calls the data analyzer for ... ”)
 - Imperatives (“Open your data file and ... ”)
 - Gerunds (“Analyzing your data is ... ”)
- Make each list item independent. Don’t use linkage words (“and,” “or”) or commas between list items.
- If using lead-in fragment for each item in a list, use an en dash to separate the lead-in from the main clause. Capitalize the first word after the dash.

Cut costs – VMware Infrastructure helps to cut capital expenditures and operating costs in the data center.

- Do not use a colon (“:”) after lead-in fragments.

A vertical list is best introduced by a complete grammatical sentence, followed by a colon. If the sentence introducing the list is not a complete sentence, there should be no punctuation.

The tasks you can achieve with this tool are

- List item . . .
- List item . . .

The following are tasks you can achieve with this tool:

- List item . . .
- List item . . .

Bulleted and numbered (ordered) lists compared

Complex sentences are often easier to read as a list. Use a bulleted, not a numbered, list when describing alternatives that have no sequence or priority. In a bulleted list, changing the order of the items should have no detrimental effect.

A numbered list is not a procedure but a list of high-level tasks that have a prescribed sequence or options that are organized by priority.

Migration happens in three stages:

1. When migration is requested, VI Client verifies that the existing virtual machine is in a stable state with its current host.
2. The virtual machine state information is copied to the target host.
3. The virtual machine resumes its activities on the new host.

See also [Parallel construction](#)

Localization

Refers to the process of adapting an application or document for a specific region or language. Localization typically involves translation, but it might also require changes in graphics, date and time formats, sorting, text direction, and so on.

Do the following to make your document ready for translation:

- Keep sentences simple and short.
- Avoid compound sentences with multiple ideas.
- Keep paragraphs or two to three sentences and about one concept.
- Do not use humor; it is potentially offensive and often can't be translated.
- Do not use religious, political, ethnic, or gender references.
- Avoid colloquialisms, jargon, and slang (e.g., “on the fly,” “blue screen of death”).

See also [Dates and times](#), [Internationalization](#)

Measurements and dimensions

Use figures and spell out common units of measurement.

inches
feet
hours
years

OK to abbreviate technical units of measurement that are familiar to the audience. However, spell out on first use when introducing a unit of measurement that may be unfamiliar to the audience.

Energy incentive rebates are usually based on the reduction in energy consumption as measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh).

Hyphenate adjectival forms before nouns.

See also [Numbers](#), [Dates and times](#)

Numbers

Spell out numbers lower than 10 (unless they are used with a unit of measure).

Only five users are online.

Wait 5 seconds before restarting the machine.

If numbers are used with parallel items in a sentence and one of the numbers is 10 or higher, use numerals for all the parallel items.

Only 5 users are online, but 25 users subscribe to the service.

When using the abbreviation for a unit of measure with a number, put no space between the number and the abbreviation.

8GB

8 gigabytes

See also [Dates and times](#), [Measurements and dimensions](#)

Ordered lists

See [Lists](#)

Page breaks

Fixing page breaks should be one of the last items on your to-do list. When the text is frozen, implement these guidelines:

- Don't allow one bullet at the top or bottom of a page when each bullet is a single line. (If the bullets are sentences, it is OK to let a bullet go to the top of a new page.)
- Make sure the lead-in sentence for a bulleted or numbered list is not at the bottom of a page, separated from the bullets.
- Don't allow a widow line (first line of a paragraph at the bottom of a page) or an orphan line (last line of a paragraph at the top of a page). Each paragraph should keep at least two lines together.

See also [Line breaks](#)

Parallel construction

Parallel construction is critical to ensuring that words, phrases, and clauses in a series or list are clear, concise, and readable. When writing words, phrases, or clauses in a series or a list, follow these guidelines:

- Use the same grammatical form for all items in a list. The items in the list must begin with all nouns, all infinitives, all prepositional phrases, all gerunds, or all clauses.
- Items in a list must all be complete sentences or all be fragments.

See also [Lists](#)

Passive voice

Avoid using unless it is obvious that the subject of the verb is irrelevant. Passive-voice verbs hide the doer of the action, the cause, and the effect. Restrict passive voice verbs to instances where readers can easily recognize that the doer is irrelevant.

When the VMware vCenter Server Install menu is displayed, click vCenter Server.

See also [Active voice](#)

Possessives

Use an apostrophe when writing in the possessive sense, except for proper names ending in “s” and plurals ending in “s,” which take only the apostrophe:

Press the keyboard’s arrow key.

Bill Gates’ company is Microsoft.

The brothers’ names were engraved in the tree.

Do not use “VMware’s” or the names of VMware products in the possessive.

See also [Brand names](#)

Prefixes

Most prefixes do not require hyphenation. The general exception to this rule is when the word that follows the prefix is a proper noun or a numeral.

See also [hyphen \(-\)](#), [Punctuation](#)

Product names

See [Brand names](#)

Professional titles

See [Job titles](#)

Punctuation

Punctuation is important not only for indicating the structure and organization of written text, but also for setting an appropriate tone and pace for the reader. Punctuation is often difficult to standardize. When in doubt about which punctuation mark to use, or whether to use one at all, decide on a standard and apply it consistently.

colon (:)

Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is the start of a complete sentence.

A vertical list is best introduced by a complete grammatical sentence followed by a colon. Otherwise, if the sentence introducing the list is not a complete sentence, there should be no punctuation.

With VMware Studio, you can accomplish the following tasks:

- Package and distribute virtual appliances.
- Patch and update virtual appliances.

Colons should be placed outside quotation marks unless they are part of the quoted material.

comma (,)

Comma usage is difficult to standardize. When in doubt, follow these rules:

- Do not use the serial comma (comma before “and” or “or”) in a simple series of three or more items.

We are hiring in Palo Alto, Austin and Atlanta.

- Do use the serial comma before the conjunction when the items in the series are complex phrases.

VMware vRealize Log Insight delivers scalable log management, intuitive dashboards, and broad third-party extensibility.

- Do not put a comma before the conjunction when one of the items in the series has a conjunction.

VMware helps companies implement cost-effective load balancing, failover, and backup and recovery solutions.

- Do not use a comma to separate two or more independent clauses (each clause has its own subject and verb).

A VMware vStorage VMFS partition is required to store your virtual machines, and a vmkcore partition is required to provide core dumps for technical support.

An exception to this comma rule is possible for two very short independent clauses.

Select Service Console and click Edit.

Imperative verbs carry their own subject (“you”), so any clause with an imperative verb is by definition an independent clause.

- Do not use a comma to separate verbs that share the same subject.

You can suspend or power off the virtual machine or unplug the device.

- Do not use a comma after a subordinate clause that occurs at the beginning of a sentence unless the phrase is short and there would be no ambiguity.

When you plug the device back in or resume the virtual machine, Workstation reconnects the device.

During this phase the server will reconnect.

- Do not use a comma to set off nonessential clauses and phrases.
- Do not use a comma to set off essential clauses and phrases.
- Commas always go inside quotation marks.

em dash (—)

Use to set off parenthetical phrases or sentences, with no space on either side. The em dash is similar to parentheses when used within a sentence. Avoid both parentheses and em dashes when possible. Instead, use two sentences.

Original: The user can select the Virtual Machines tab but does not see a virtual machine listing on the tab or any status information—the table is blank.

Rewrite: The user can click the Virtual Machines tab but does not see a virtual machine list on the tab or any status information. The table is blank.

See also [en dash \(-\)](#), [hyphen \(-\)](#), [Punctuation](#)

en dash (-)

Use for ranges.

Copyright 1998–2006

266MHz–500MHz

Use the en dash instead of a hyphen in adjectival phrases that contain an open compound.

The New York–based company

You can also use the en dash, with spaces, to separate a list fragment from the rest of the list item.

VMware ESX hosts provide three default roles:

No Access User – Users assigned this role for an object cannot view or change the object.

Read Only User – Users assigned this role for an object can view the state of the object and details about the object.

Administrator – Users assigned this role for an object can view and perform all actions on the object.

See also [em dash \(–\)](#), [hyphen \(-\)](#), [Punctuation](#)

hyphen (-)

A hyphen connects two (or more) words.

If a compound word is not in this style guide or your project style sheet, check the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. If you can't find the compound there, use the following rules.

When in doubt, do not hyphenate.

Don't use a hyphen:

- Between most prefixes and common nouns.

 multiprocessor, nonzero

- After an adverb ending in “ly.”

 Directly accessible properties, frequently used items

- In a modifier whose first element is a noun and second element is a letter or a numeral.

 Group B users, type 2 databases

- To indicate a range. (Use an en dash [–] instead.)

 266MHz–500MHz, Copyright 1998–2006

- In keyboard shortcuts.

 Ctrl+C; Alt, F, O

- In adjectival phrases that contain an open compound. Use the en dash.

 The New York–based company

Do use a hyphen:

- To clarify an ambiguous word or phrase.

 Re-sort the list, single-host computer resource

- When one of the words is a past or present participle.

 Host-based licensing, storage-using client

- When indicating location.

 Lower-left pane, upper-right corner

- Between a prefix and a numeral, acronym, or capitalized word.

 Pre-2005 software, non-IEEE

- In compounds that use all-, cross-, ex-, or self-

All-inclusive price, cross-platform compatibility

- In spelled-out fractions.

One-eighth, two-thirds

- In a modifier whose first element is a number or letter and whose second element is a noun or participle.

128-bit hash, D-shaped connector

- In “right-click” and “double-click.”
- To indicate a minus sign.

A value of -1 indicates ...

See also [em dash \(—\)](#), [en dash\(–\)](#), [Key names](#), [Punctuation](#)

States/provinces

In running text, the names of states and provinces should be spelled out. In press releases submitted to wire services, states and provinces should be abbreviated according to AP style (Conn. for Connecticut). For all other instances, when listing a city along with its state or province, use the two-letter postal abbreviation.

Tables

Use a table to present related information that can be organized into two or more columns for easier reference. Table formats are preset in the template. Follow these guidelines:

- Do not stack tables. Two or more consecutive tables require text between each to give the reader a visual clue of the end of one table, and to introduce the next table.
- Do not create a table with only one row or column. A table assumes more than one item.
- Do not follow a heading with a table. Every heading needs text to follow it and explain the content in the following section, table or procedure.
- Tables are numbered sequentially and titles are in title case above the table. Use the word “Table” and a numeral in a heavier weight followed by a period.

Table 1. Configuration Details

- Use heading-style capitalization for table column and row headings.
- Ensure that table entries are treated consistently (capitalization, end periods, styles, etc.).

Telephone numbers

- Use periods, not hyphens or parentheses.
- For domestic calls, use this form: 212.621.1500.
- For international numbers, use the plus sign +, the country code, the city code, and the telephone number: +44.20.7535.1515.
- The form for toll-free numbers is 800.111.1000.

Text in figures

Figures used in VMware marketing collateral should include a descriptive caption, and each distinct object in the figure should be labeled for easy identification. Figures can also optionally include title text embedded within the image itself.

Figure captions

Sequentially number titles for figures and screenshots that occur in normal text in white papers and longer documents. Avoid using acronyms for branded concepts, features, products, and technologies.

For each figure caption, the word “Figure” and the figure number in bold, followed by a period, should precede the figure caption. The figure caption itself should be written in title case and describe the content sufficiently.

Figure 1. Configuration Details

Datasheets and one-page documents use a caption underneath the figures instead of a title on top.

Figure labels

OK to use accepted acronyms in label figures for branded concepts, features, products, and technologies without referring to the full term. Use title-style capitalization for figure labels.

Titles of figures

Figure titles, if used, should be written in title case and should mirror the figure caption. Center-align figure titles and position them at the top of the figure. Do not use more than one figure title in each figure.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#), [Capitalization](#), [Tables](#)

Titles of works

Titles of books, periodicals, movies, plays, television series, paintings, sculptures, and music albums are set in italics. Titles of songs, articles, poems, radio shows, and newsletters are set in Roman type font and put in quotationmarks. Titles of computer games, software packages, online publications, and websites are set in Roman.

Books cited or mentioned must have publication information in parentheses, including publisher’s name and year of publication.

Mastering VMware Infrastructure 3 (Sybex, 2008) by Chris McCain

Trademarks

See the VMware Trademark Guide for a list of VMware trademarks and instructions on their use. When appropriate, use one of the following trademark symbols in customer-facing communications:

™ = Trademark ownership claimed

® = Registered trademark

When applying trademark and copyright symbols in text-only email messages, use the following:

(tm) = trademark ownership claimed

(r) = registered trademark

The superscript “r” symbol (®) immediately following the trademarked term indicates that the mark has been registered in the United States and/or another jurisdiction. The mark is commonly referred to as a registered trademark.

The superscript “tm” symbol (™) immediately following the trademarked term indicates either that a registration has been applied for or that the owner is relying on common law usage right through continued and proper use of the mark.

It is also important to attach the VMware brand to our trademarked products and services. This helps to establish and reinforce the VMware name in the marketplace and maximize the name recognition of the company. The brand name should always be used at the first reference to the product or service in the copy.

When referencing trademarked terms, use the following guidelines:

- Use trademark symbols (®,™) in body text on first use of a trademarked term. Use “(r)” and “(tm)” in text-only email messages.
- Don’t use trademark symbols on title pages, or in headlines, FAQ questions, in text headings, subheadings, table column and row headings, or headers and footers.
- Trademarks are also not required in customer emails and trade show signage.
- Use trademarks in titles or headings only when they are the sole occurrence of the trademarked name. First consider inserting another instance of the name in the body text.
- You aren’t required to repeat the symbol with each product name. For example, if many product names in your text start with “VMware,” use the trademark symbol only with the first use of any one of those names.
- Do not use trademark symbols with third-party names unless instructed to do so by a product manager or a member of the legal department.

How to write about trademarked names in text

In addition to adding a trademark symbol on first use, adhere to the following rules from VMware Legal:

- Whenever possible, use VMware trademarks as adjectives followed by a common noun or the applicable proper noun for a product or service.

Original: vSphere delivers the following benefits:

Rewrite: vSphere software delivers the following benefits:

- Do not use VMware trademarks in the possessive form.

Original: VMware Workstation’s flexibility gives IT administrators new options.

Rewrite: IT administrators gain new options with VMware Workstation systems.

- Do not use VMware trademarks in plural form.

Original: The customer has a lot of vSpheres installed.

Rewrite: The customer has many VMware vSphere instances at work in their environment.

- Do not use VMware product names as verbs.

Original: They have plans to vSphere their servers.

Rewrite: They have plans to consolidate their servers with VMware vSphere systems.

- Do not combine VMware trademarks with another company’s trademark or product name.

Original: They deployed multiple Microsoft Exchange vSphere servers.

Rewrite: They deployed multiple servers running Microsoft Exchange on the VMware vSphere platform.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#), [Brand names](#)

Translation

See [Localization](#)

URLs

See [Hyperlinks](#)

Version numbers

Version numbers are no longer required for branding purposes. OK to apply appropriate version number in headings and body text, either after first use or after all uses, but be consistent throughout document.

Do not apply version numbers to first-generation (“1.0”) products unless information in document is specific to that release (“New in version 1.0.1”).

VMware usage dictionary for selected terms

This section contains an alphabetical list of terms used in VMware communications. Each entry in the list provides guidance on editorial style and accepted usage.

3D

Note capitalization. Do not place a hyphen between “3” and “D.”

above, below

OK as adverbs, but don’t use as modifiers before a noun (“the above text”) or to refer to tables or diagrams. Instead, refer directly to the figure or table being referenced.

Original: As the diagram below illustrates, VMware ESX is a bare-metal hypervisor.

Rewrite: As Figure 2 illustrates, VMware ESX is a bare-metal hypervisor.

See also [Tables](#), [Text in figures](#)

ACE

Acronym for “assured computing environment.” Spell out on first use unless referring to the VMware ACE product. When describing a virtual machine created with VMware ACE, use “ACE package(s)” instead of “ACE(s).”

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

Active directory

Two words. Use initial caps in all cases.

ActiveSync

One word with the “A” and “S” initial caps in all cases.

AM

Note uppercase and no periods.

See also [Dates and times](#)

any more, anymore

Used as two words, the meaning is “any additional.”

If you have any more existing snapshots ...

As a one-word adverb, the meaning is “any longer.”

The user does not have permission to create the alarm anymore.

any time, anytime

Used as two words, often after “at,” the phrase refers to a specific point (or a measurable duration) in time.

You can revert to the snapshot at any time.

Do you have any time for this task?

anytime, anywhere

OK to use this two-word phrase as an adverb or adjective. Always use the comma.

The server provides users with anytime, anywhere access to resources.

The software provides users with access to their desktops anytime, anywhere.

API

Acronym for “application programming interface.” No need to spell out.

You can use the API to register and unregister virtual machines and to gather information about them.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

apostrophe (’)

Use apostrophes to denote possession, contractions, and quotes within quotes.

See also [Punctuation](#)

appendixes

Not “appendices.”

application

Preferable to “program” or “software application.”

app tunnel/app tunneling

Two words, lowercase.

Autodiscover

One word. Takes initial cap in all cases.

auto lock

Two words, lowercase.

autoscale

One word.

backslash (\)

Use only in Windows path names. UNIX paths and URLs use slashes (/).

See also [slash \(/\)](#), [Punctuation](#)

backup, back up

One word when used as an adjective or a noun; two words when used as a verb.

BC/DR

Abbreviation for “business continuity/disaster recovery.” Spell out on first use.

See also [business continuity](#), [disaster recovery](#)

beta

Note lowercase. Use for beta software, beta release, public beta. Do not use as a verb.

bidirectional

One word, no hyphen.

big data

Two words, lowercase except in titles and headings.

BIOS

Acronym for “basic input/output system.” No need to spell out.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

blacklist

One word, lowercase.

business continuity

Note lowercase. Treat as a common noun.

See also [BC/DR](#), [disaster recovery](#)

business mobility

No initial caps except in headlines and titles.

CAC

Acronym for “Common Access Card.” Spell out with initial caps on first use.

can

Use “can” (not “may”) when referring to a persons or a system’s known ability to accomplish a task. This is an internationalization issue.

Original: If the virtual machine is on a host with technology enabled, the user may see all the other hosts in its cluster.

Rewrite: If the virtual machine is on a host with technology enabled, the user can see all the other hosts in its cluster.

See also [may](#)

canceled, canceling

Not “cancelled” or “cancelling.”

CapEx

Abbreviation for “capital expenditures.” No need to spell out.

The solution reduces CapEx.

CD

Acronym for “compact disc.” No need to spell out.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#), [disc](#)

CD-ROM

Acronym for “compact disc read-only memory.” No need to spell out.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#), [disc](#)

certificate authority

Lowercase; can be abbreviated CA after first use.

chargeback

One word when used as adjective or noun.

charge back

Two words when used as verb. No hyphen.

check box

Two words.

check-in, check in

Hyphenate as a noun or adverb; two words and no hyphen as a verb.

checklist

One word.

check-out, check out, checkout

Hyphenate as a noun or adverb; two words and no hyphen a verb; one word when referring to completing a transaction or leaving a hotel.

checkpoint

One word.

choose

Use with menu names and menu items.

Right-click and choose Reboot.

See also [click](#), [press](#), [select](#), [deselect](#)

CIM

Acronym for “Common Information Model.” Spell out on first use.

You can use any Common Information Model (CIM) client to discover storage resources on a VMware ESX host.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

CIM, CAP, EUC

Acronyms for the three vectors formerly used to organize VMware marketing programs: cloud infrastructure and management (CIM), cloud application platform (CAP), and end-user computing (EUC). Use in internal VMware documents only. Spell out on first use.

click

Not “click on.” Use “click” with arrows, buttons, files, hyperlinks, icons, and tabs. Use “click in” only when referring to a region (such as the desktop, a scroll bar channel, or a window’s background) rather than a specific object.

Click the General tab.

Click the up and down arrows to enter the number of megabytes allocated.

Click in the Overview map.

See also [choose](#), [press](#), [select](#), [deselect](#)

click here

Avoid whenever possible. Instead, use descriptive link text that is relevant to the destination URL.

Original: To download VMware Fusion, click here.

Rewrite: Download VMware Fusion today.

See also [Anchor text](#), [Hyperlinks](#)

client-server

Not “client/server.”

cloud, the cloud

OK to use “cloud” as a synonym for cloud computing, cloud computing implementation, cloud computing environment, or cloud computing strategy.

Now is the time for your cloud.

Leading companies in all industries are moving to cloud.

Companies include VMware solutions in their cloud strategies.

OK also to use “the cloud” as a synonym for the cloud computing environment.

Organizations are moving their applications to the cloud.

Now you can store your favorite music in the cloud.

Cloud Management

Use with initial caps to signify VMware product family. Use lowercase when referring to general area of technology.

See also [VMware Cloud Management](#)

cloud native

Two words and no initial caps except in headlines and titles.

co-founder

Note hyphenation.

COM

Acronym for “Common Object Model.” Spell out on first use in text aimed at a business level audience.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

COOP

Acronym for “continuity of operations.” Spell out on first use.

co-opetition

Hyphenated and lowercase. Capitalize “C” but not “O” when using in title style.

cosponsor

No hyphenation.

cost-effective

Use hyphen. Avoid “cost-effectively.”

could

Replace with “can” or “might” whenever possible.

Original: The setup could include one HBA and two storage processors.

Rewrite: The setup might include one HBA and two storage processors.

When providing examples, use simple present-tense verbs instead of postulating what someone or something “could” or “would” do.

Original: For example, an attacker could change the entire virtual switch configuration.

Rewrite: For example, an attacker can change the entire virtual switch configuration.

Original: If you removed all the running hardware, the virtual machines would still be able to communicate with each other.

Rewrite: If you remove all the running hardware, the virtual machines can still communicate with each other.

co-worker

Note hyphenation.

CPU

Acronym for “central processing unit.” No need to spell out.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

Cross-Cloud

Takes hyphen and initial caps in the following trademarked VMware solution names:

VMware Cross-Cloud Architecture™

VMware Cross-Cloud Infrastructure™

VMware Cross-Cloud Platform™

VMware Cross-Cloud Services™

cut and paste, cut-and-paste

No hyphens when used as a verb. Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

VMware Fusion allows users to cut and paste items between Windows and Mac applications.

VMware Fusion supports cut-and-paste operations between Windows and Mac applications.

cybersecurity

One word, no hyphen.

DaaS

Abbreviation for desktops as a service. Spell out on first use.

data

Use only with singular verbs.

Original: In persistent mode, all data are written out permanently to the disk.

Rewrite: In persistent mode, all data is written out permanently to the disk.

database as a service, database-as-a-service

Hyphenate when used as an adjective. OK to abbreviate as “DBaaS” after first use.

data center

Two words, no hyphen.

data loss prevention

Lowercase; can be abbreviated DLP after first use.

data mart

Two words; lowercase.

datasheet

One word, no hyphen.

datastore

One word, no hyphen.

DevOps

Short for “Development and Operations.” No need to spell out.

DevOps-Ready IT

Takes hyphen and capital “D,” “O,” and “R” in all cases.

DevTest

Short for “development and test.” No need to spell out.

digitalize

This word signifies the transformation of experiences, business processes and models through the application of information technology.

The bank plans to digitalize its customer service by making more services available online.

digitize

This word signifies the transformation of information into digital form.

The programmers will digitize financial information to create a new banking application.

DHCP

Acronym for “Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol.” No need to spell out.

The DHCP server provides IP network addresses to virtual machines in configurations that are not bridged to an external network.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

disaster recovery

Note lowercase. Treat as a common noun. OK, to abbreviate as DR in headlines, email subject lines, and after first use in text.

See also [BC/DR](#), [disaster recovery](#)

disc

Use when referring to CDs, DVDs, and other optical media (BluRay, HD-DVD, CD-ROM, etc.).

See also [CD](#), [CD-ROM](#), [disk](#)

disk

Use when referring to hard drives, floppies, and other magnetic media.

See also [disc](#)

double-click

Note hyphenation.

download

One word.

downloadable

OK to use.

downtime

One word.

drag-and-drop

Note hyphenation. When used as a verb, “drag” is sufficient.

If a cluster is the drag-and-drop target, the Select Destination window appears.

Drag the virtual machine to the target host.

email

One word, no hyphen. Capitalize as “Email” in a heading or as the first word in a sentence.

end user, end-user

Two words when used as a noun; hyphenate when used as an adjective.

End-User Computing

Use initial caps only when referring to the VMware organization.

et al. (et alii/aliae)

Don’t use. Use “and others.”

etc. (et cetera)

Latin abbreviation. OK to use in parenthetical statements. Don’t use in regular body text. Instead, use “and more,” “and so on,” or “and the rest.”

Ethernet

Note capitalization.

Evaluator’s Guide

Don’t use. Instead, use “Evaluation Guide” or “Reviewer’s Guide.”

See also [Reviewer’s guide](#)

event log

Two words unless used in the context of code (EventLog).

e-words

The following words are hyphenated and use lowercase unless they start a sentence:

- e-commerce
 - e-learning
 - e-prescribe
 - e-reader
-

exclamation mark (!)

Use sparingly.

See also [Punctuation](#)

external cloud

Do not use. Use “public cloud” instead.

See also [public cloud](#)

extranet

One word, no Cap.

failback

One word in all cases, no hyphen.

failover, fail over

Two words as a verb (though “fail” is often sufficient).

FAQ

Acronym for “frequently asked questions.” Do not use “FAQs” unless referring to multiple FAQ documents. No need to spell out.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

faster

Use instead of “higher” when referring to speed.

266MHz or faster

See also [later](#)

fault tolerance

Use lowercase unless referring to the vSphere Fault Tolerance (FT) software.

federal

No initial cap when referring to entire vertical market.

These are challenging times for federal customers.

The federal government’s data centers are diverse.

fewer

Use with quantifiable items that are plural nouns. Use “less” with singular nouns, percentages, and mathematical formulas.

You might decide to use fewer, larger VMware VMFS volumes.

Other virtual disk configurations require less free space.

Utilization was less than 40 percent.

Fibre Channel

Note spelling and capitalization.

filename

One word.

file sharing, file-sharing

Two words when used as a noun; hyphenate when used as an adjective.

file system

Two words.

firewall

One word.

firewalling

Do not use. Rewrite as firewall(s), firewall protection, firewall services, etc.

flowsheets or flowcharts

One word, not two.

four nines

Use this two-word phrase instead of “four 9s” when discussing availability issues.

FreeBSD

One word. Name of an operating system. Note embedded capitalization.

FTP

Acronym for “File Transfer Protocol.” No need to spell out.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

Gb

Acronym for “gigabit.” No need to spell out, but use lowercase when spelled out. When using the abbreviation with a numeral, don’t include any space.

The file transfer rate caps out at approximately 1.2Gb.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

GB

Acronym for “gigabyte.” No need to spell out, but use lowercase when spelled out. When using the abbreviation with a numeral, don’t include any space.

The document takes up 1GB of hard drive space.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

GemStone

Note capitalization.

geofence, geofencing, and geofenced

All one word, no hyphen.

GHz

Acronym for “gigahertz.” No need to spell out, but use lowercase when spelled out. When using the abbreviation with a numeral, don’t include any space.

Configure the virtual machine processor to run at 2GHz.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

handheld

One word, no hyphen.

Hands-on Labs

Use initial caps (expect for “o” in “Hands-on”) in all instances.

HCI

Acronym for hyperconverged infrastructure. Spell out after first use.

healthcare

One word. Note lowercase.

These are challenging times for healthcare customers.

help desk

Two words, lowercase.

High Availability

Use initial caps only in the VMware product name. OK to abbreviate as HA, after first use, in name of VMware product:

VMware vSphere High Availability (or) VMware vSphere HA

high-level

Note hyphenation.

home page

Two words.

host name, host-name

Two words as a noun. Hyphenate as an adjective.

hot fix, hot-fix

Two words as a noun. Hyphenate as an adjective.

HTTP

Acronym for “Hypertext Transfer Protocol.” No need to spell out.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

hybrid cloud

Note lowercase. Do not hyphenate when writing as an adjective.

See also [private cloud](#), [public cloud](#), [unified hybrid cloud](#)

hyperconverged infrastructure (HCI)

One word, but no initial caps except in titles and headlines. Spell out on first use. Then HCI acronym is OK.

hyperconverged software

One word, but no initial caps except in titles and headlines.

Hyper-V

Note capitalization and hyphenation.

IDE

Acronym for “integrated development environment.” No need to spell out.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

i.e. (id est)

OK to use in parenthetical statements. Don’t use in regular body text. Use “that is” (always followed by a comma).

On a Windows Server 2003 host, you must be logged in as a local administrator (i.e., not logged in to the domain) to install VMware Server.

if ... then

A subordinate clause that starts with “if” does not require “then.”

Original: If you are using VMware VMFS-2, then you must upgrade to VMware VMFS-3.

Rewrite: If you are using VMware VMFS-2, you must upgrade to VMware VMFS-3.

inbox or outbox

One word, no hyphen.

indexes

Not “indices.”

infrastructure as a service, infrastructure-as-a-service

OK to abbreviate as “IaaS” after first use. Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

in order to

Avoid. In most cases, “to” is sufficient.

Internationalization

Refers to the process of designing applications or documents that work well in most global settings and that can easily accommodate changes in language, keyboards, culture, and so on. When possible, use language that facilitates internationalization.

See also [Localization](#)

Internet

Note capitalization.

intranet

Note lowercase.

I/O

Acronym for “input/output.” Use sparingly, but no need to spell out.

Be sure your I/O adapter is listed in the compatibility guide for the product you are installing.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#), [IOPS](#)

IOPS

Acronym for “input/output operations per second.” No need to spell out.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#), [I/O](#)

IP

Acronym for “Internet protocol.” No need to spell out. Do not use when referring to intellectual property.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

IT

Acronym for “information technology.” No need to spell out if used as an adjective. Avoid using as a noun when referring to individuals or groups of people.

Original: Today’s IT faces the challenge of elevating service availability while reducing costs.

Rewrite: Today’s IT organizations face the challenge of elevating service availability while reducing costs.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

ITaaS

Acronym for “IT-as-a-service.” Spell out on first use. Note specialized capitalization.

See also [IT as a service](#)

IT as a service, IT-as-a-service

OK to abbreviate as “ITaaS” after first use. Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

it is [important, clear ...] that

Avoid using “it is” clauses unless the antecedent for “it” is clear.

Original: Because iSCSI technology uses the IP networks to connect to remote targets, it is necessary to ensure the security of the connection.

Rewrite: Because iSCSI technology uses the IP networks to connect to remote targets, you must ensure the security of the connection.

IT service delivery

Note lowercase for “service delivery”; treat as a common noun.

its, it's

Use “its” (no apostrophe) to indicate possession.

VMware ESX has its own file format for storing virtual disk files.

Use “it's” (with apostrophe) as a contraction for “it is.” Try to avoid using this contraction if possible.

Original: It's always safest to make backup copies of all the files in your virtual machine's directory before you start.

Rewrite: For safety, make backup copies of all the files in your virtual machine's directory before you start.

just (adv.)

Avoid using as the term is extraneous in most cases. Avoid uses that suggest a task is simple.

Original: Just select the item and click the Maps tab.

Rewrite: Select the item and click the Maps tab.

KB

Acronym for “kilobyte.” Lowercase when spelled out. When using the abbreviation with a numeral, don't include a space between the numeral and abbreviation.

8KB

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

knowledge base

Two words.

Go to the VMware knowledge base for more information.

LAN

Acronym for “local area network.” No need to spell out.

Do not select or load any LAN drivers.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

laptop

One word. Use instead of “notebook.”

later

Use to refer to versions of processors and similar hardware components, whose upgrades are often not indicated by increasing numbers.

Pentium or later

See also [faster](#)

less

See [fewer](#)

lifecycle

Treat as common noun or adjective and write as one word.

like, such as

Use “like” as “equal to” or “similar to”; “such as” means “for example.”

log in, login

Not “log on.” One word when used as noun or adjective; two words when used as a verb. If you need a preposition, use the three-word phrase “log in to.”

Log in to the service console as the root user.

You need appropriate login credentials.

LUN

Acronym for “logical unit number.” No need to spell out for technical audiences, but spell out on first use if introducing the term or when explaining the concepts and principles of shared storage.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

market-leading

Avoid this phrase when describing VMware or its products, as this can be misinterpreted to refer to financial markets, not software markets. Use “industryleading” instead.

may

Avoid. Use “may” only when referring to security and passwords or restrictions imposed by code languages or other cases where permission (not capability per se) is an issue. This is an internationalization issue.

Use “can” when referring to a person or a system’s known ability to accomplish a task.

Original: If the virtual machine is on a host with technology enabled, the user may see all the other hosts in its cluster.

Rewrite: If the virtual machine is on a host with technology enabled, the user can see all the other hosts in its cluster. Use “might” when referring to an event whose occurrence is uncertain.

Original: Certain virtual network services may not work as well with a customized subnet mask.

Rewrite: Certain virtual network services might not work as well with a customized subnet mask.

See also [Localization](#)

Mb

Acronym for “megabit.” Lowercase when spelled out. When using the abbreviation with a numeral, don’t include any space.

10Mb

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

MB

Acronym for “megabyte.” Lowercase when spelled out. When using the abbreviation with a numeral, don’t include any space.

16MB

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

MHz

Acronym for “megahertz.” Lowercase when spelled out. When using the abbreviation with a numeral, don’t include any space.

450MHz

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

micro-

Most terms starting with “micro” are one word with no hyphen:

- microcomputer
- microprocessor
- microsecond
- microservices
- microkernel
- micro-segmentation

Use hyphen in all cases.

might

Use “might” (not “may”) when referring to an event whose occurrence is uncertain. This is an internationalization issue.

Original: Certain virtual network services may not work as well with a customized subnet mask.

Rewrite: Certain virtual network services might not work as well with a customized subnet mask.

mobile access gateway

Lowercase unless referring to VMware AirWatch Mobile Access Gateway.

moveable

Not “movable.”

multi-

Typically, use no hyphen after this prefix. Use a hyphen if the word that follows is capitalized or begins with “i.”

- multilingual
- multifactor
- multitenant
- multitenancy
- multiuser

See also [hyphen \(-\)](#), [Prefixes](#), [Punctuation](#)

multi-cloud

Takes hyphen in all cases. Lower case except in headlines and titles. Note that this is an exception among words and phrases starting with “multi.”

NFS

Acronym for “Network File System,” a file system protocol. No need to spell out on first use unless introducing the term or explaining the relationship between virtualization and shared storage.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

NIC

Acronym for “network interface card.” OK in tables and figures where space is limited, but avoid using in body text. Instead, use “Ethernet adapter” if appropriate or specify the type (such as “Token Ring adapter”). To cover multiple types and general cases, use “network adapter.”

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

non-

When used as a prefix, a hyphen is usually not required.

See also [hyphen \(-\)](#), [Prefixes](#), [Punctuation](#)

noncompliant

One word; do not hyphenate.

note that

Avoid. If you need to draw the user’s attention, use a Caution or Warning box.

Original: Note that the virtual machines serviced by a single virtual switch can be in different VLANs.

Rewrite: NOTE: A single virtual switch can service virtual machines in different VLANs.

NUMA

Acronym for “nonuniform memory access.” No need to spell out on first use unless introducing the concept or explaining memory management in a virtualized environment.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

OEM

Acronym for “original equipment manufacturer.” No need to spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

offsite

One word, no hyphen when used as an adjective.

See also [onsite](#)

OK

Not “okay.”

on demand

Use on-demand as adjective.

We use on-demand services.

Use on demand as adverb.

We deliver services on demand.

Use OnDemand in VMware product names.

We use vCloud Air OnDemand.

on-premises

Do not use “on-premise.”

See also [onsite](#)

once

Use to mean one occurrence of an event.

Click the mouse button once.

Use “after,” not “once” to refer to an action that takes place later.

Original: Once a user/group/role is set ...

Rewrite: After a user, group, or role is set ...

online, offline

One word.

only

When using as an adjective, place “only” immediately before the word or phrase it is qualifying. Don’t place adverbs between prepositions.

Original: Each inventory object can only be added to its corresponding hierarchical parent.

Rewrite: Each inventory object can be added only to its corresponding hierarchical parent.

onscreen

One word, no hyphen.

onsite

One word, no hyphen when used as an adjective.

See also [offsite](#)

open-in management

Use hyphen.

open-source

Use as adjective only. Always hyphenate.

OpEx

Abbreviation for “operating expenditures.” No need to spell out.

OS

Acronym for “operating system.” Whenever possible, spell out on first use in body text. No need to spell out in tables or figures where space is limited. For plural, use “OSs.” Do not use “OSes.”

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

over-the-air vs. over the air

Hyphenate as an adjective; no hyphen as an adverb.

OVF

Acronym for “Open Virtualization Format.” Spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

PaaS

Acronym for “platform as a service.” Spell out on first use. Note specialized capitalization.

See also [platform-as-a-service](#)

P2P

Acronym for “physical-to-physical.” Spell out on first use.

P2V

Acronym for “physical-to-virtual.” Spell out on first use.

paravirtualization

One word, no hyphen.

PC

Acronym for “personal computer.” No need to spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

PCI

Acronym for payment card industry. Spell out on first use.

PCoIP

Abbreviation for “PC over IP.” Spell out on first use. OK to use the redundant phrase “PC over IP protocol.”

percent

Spell out in body text. Use the “%” symbol in headlines, tables and figures where space is limited.

PIV

Acronym for “Personal Identity Verification.” Spell out on first use with initial caps.

platform as a service, platform-as-a-service

Hyphenate when used as adjective. OK to abbreviate as “PaaS” after first use.

plug-in, plug in

Hyphenate when used as adjective. Use two words when using as verb. Do not use “plugin.” Capitalize as “Plug-In” in titles and headers.

PM

Note uppercase with no periods.

See also [AM](#), [Dates and times](#)

pop-up menu

Refers to the contextual menu that users see after a right-click. Note hyphenation when used as noun or adjective.

prepopulate

No hyphen.

press

Use with items the reader actually touches (hardware), such as keyboard keys or an on/off button on the physical machine.

Press Ctrl+C.

See also [select](#), [deselect](#), [Key names](#), [type](#)

private cloud

Note lowercase. Do not hyphenate when writing as an adjective.

See also [hybrid cloud](#), [public cloud](#)

public beta

Note lowercase. Not “prerelease beta” or “general beta.”

public cloud

Note lowercase. Do not hyphenate when writing as an adjective.

See also [hybrid cloud](#), [public cloud](#)

quotation mark (“ ”)

In most cases, periods and commas go inside quotation marks and colons; question marks, colons, and semicolons go outside quotation marks. For full details, see *The Chicago Manual of Style*. (British style is quite different.)

For quotation marks in titles, headings, subheadings, and captions, use single quotes.

See also [Punctuation](#)

RAID

Acronym for “redundant array of independent disks.” No need to spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

RAM

Acronym for “random access memory.” No need to spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

real time, real-time

Two words when used as a noun. Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

remote access, remote-access

Two words when used as noun. Hyphenate when used as adjective.

Customers rely on VMware for remote access.

VMware is becoming a leader in remote-access solutions.

re-engineer

Use hyphen.

Reviewer’s Guide

Refers to document intended for people who are evaluating or reviewing the features and functions of a product such as VMware vSphere 4. Note capitalization and use of singular possessive. Do not use “Reviewer Guide,” “Reviewers’ Guide,” “Evaluator Guide,” or “Evaluator’s Guide.”

right-click

Always hyphenate.

rightsized

One word, no hyphen.

roadmap

One word.

ROI

Acronym for “return on investment.” No need to spell out on first use. OK to use “ROI” when specifically discussing the return on investments in technology solutions, but avoid using as a generic marketing claim (e.g., “increase ROI and lower TCO!!!”).

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#), [Jargon](#)

RTO

Abbreviation for “recovery time objective.” Spell out on first use with no hyphen.

runtime

One word, no hyphen.

SaaS

Acronym for “software as a service.” Spell out on first use.

See also [software as a service](#), [software-as-a-service](#)

SAN

Acronym for “storage area network.” No need to spell out on first use unless introducing the term to a new audience or explaining the concept of shared storage.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

SATA

Acronym for “serial advanced technology attachment,” a hardware interface for computer hard drives. No need to spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

scale-up, scale up, scale-out, scale out

These terms take a hyphen when used as adjectives:

VMware vSphere supports both scale-up and scale-out applications.

They are spelled with two words when used as verbs:

Use vSphere to scale up and scale out your applications.

screenshot

One word. This is VMware style and differs from the usage in the Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary.

SCSI

Acronym for “small computer system interface.” No need to spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

SDDC

Acronym for Software-Defined Data Center. Spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

SDK

Acronym for “software development kit.” No need to spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

select, deselect

Use “select” and “deselect” with check boxes or to describe selecting items in a list, including file and folder names. Use “click” for most other GUI objects.

However, use “choose” with menus and menu items.

Select the type of SCSI adapter you want to use with the virtual machine.

Deselect the Use Script check box.

See also [choose, click](#)

semicolon (;)

The semicolon separates two independent clauses that have no conjunction.

Use to separate clauses that contain a comma series.

With virtualization, you can increase utilization; reduce power, cooling, and real estate costs; and improve business agility.

In many cases, splitting the clauses into two sentences is a better solution.

See also [colon \(:\)](#), [Punctuation](#)

she/he

See [Gender](#)

siloes

Do not use. Replace with “fragmented,” “inconsistent,” or “infrastructure silos.”

since

Restrict “since” to its time-related meaning. Use “because,” not “since,” to indicate causation. This is an internationalization issue.

Original: Since VMware vCenter Server is a service, proceed to your Windows services list.

Rewrite: Because VMware vCenter Server is a service, proceed to your Windows services list.

single pane of glass monitoring

No hyphens.

single sign-on (SSO)

OK to abbreviate as SSO after first use.

skillset

One word, no hyphen.

slash (/)

Avoid creating new slash compounds (“disk/LUN”). Use “and” or “or” instead.

Exceptions: I/O, read/write

Slashes are appropriate for URLs and UNIX path names. Windows path names use backslashes.

See also [backslash \(\\)](#), [Key names](#), [Punctuation](#)

SLED

Acronym for state and local government and education, a vertical market segment. Spell out on first use.

smart card, smart-card

Use your smart card to access the system.

Customers rely on software vendors for smart-card services.

smartphone

One word.

SMB

Abbreviation for “small and midsize business.” OK to use as plural noun as such: SMBs. No need to spell out.

SMP

Acronym for “symmetric multiprocessing.” No need to spell out on first use unless explaining the concept.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

SnS

Abbreviation for “support and subscription.” Spell out on first use with no hyphens.

software as a service, software-as-a-service

Hyphenate when used as adjective. OK to abbreviate as “SaaS” after first use.

Software-Defined Data Center

OK to use uppercase for emphasis in customer-facing communications. Avoid suggesting that this is a VMware product or service. May be abbreviated as SDDC after spelling out on first use.

See also [SDDC](#)

Software-Defined Enterprise

Use with initial caps in all instances.

Software-Defined Storage

OK to use uppercase for emphasis in customer-facing communications.

Spaces after periods, between sentences

Use a single letter space after a period at the end of a sentence, not two.

SpringSource

Note capitalization.

SSH

Acronym for “Secure Shell.” No need to spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

SSL

Acronym for “Secure Socket Layer.” No need to spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

SSO

Abbreviation for “single sign-on.” Spell out on first use.

standalone

One word, no hyphen.

start-up

Use hyphen in all cases.

switchover

switch over.

SUSE Linux

Not “SuSE Linux.”

sync

Not “synch.” OK to use as a verb.

syslog

One word and lowercase unless part of a proper name like Windows Syslog Server.

TCO

Acronym for “total cost of ownership.” No need to spell out on first use. OK to use when specifically discussing the cost of ownership for technology solutions, but avoid using as generic marketing jargon (e.g., “Reduce TCO!!!”) without providing additional context.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#), [Jargon](#), [ROI](#)

TCP

Acronym for “Transmission Control Protocol.” No need to spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

telecom

One word; lowercase unless it starts a sentence.

Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, H.R. 1722

Use initial capitals per the above.

that

Use “that” when the information that follows it is essential for the sentence to be complete and make sense.

The host machine must have one of the processors that VMware Server supports.

Use “which” for supplementary or parenthetical information that would not change the meaning of the sentence if it were omitted. A “which” clause is always preceded by a comma.

Under host-only networking, a virtual machine is connected to the host on a private network, which normally is not visible outside the host.

See also [which](#)

thin client, thin-client

Hyphenate when used as adjective.

Use a thin client to access the system.

Customers rely on software vendors for thin-client solutions.

third party, third-party

Hyphenate when used as an adjective. Do not use “3rd party.”

time to market (TTM)

Do not use time-2-market or T2M.

OK to abbreviate as TTM after spelling out on first use.

type

See [press](#)

UDP

Acronym for “User Datagram Protocol.” No need to spell out.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

underway

One word.

unified access

Note lowercase.

unified hybrid cloud

No initial caps except in headlines and titles.

universal client

Note lowercase.

U.S.

Acronym for “United States.” Note periods. Only use abbreviation as an adjective. When referring to currency, use “USD.”

USD \$299

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#)

username

OK to spell as one word in the context of logging on to a computer or web portal.

vApp

Do not spell out.

vCloud Powered, vCloud Virtualized

Use these “badge” phrases with initial caps to describe products, as appropriate.

No hyphens.

VDC-OS

Avoid. Use “cloud operating system” or “cloud OS” instead.

VDI

Acronym for “virtual desktop infrastructure.” Spell out on first use.

See also [Abbreviations and acronyms](#), [virtual desktop infrastructure](#)

virtual data center

Treat as common noun.

virtual desktop infrastructure

Note lowercase. OK to abbreviate as “VDI” after first use.

Use when referring generically to a category or class of software used to manage and control virtual desktop machines. When referring to the product formerly known as VMware Virtual Desktop Infrastructure, use VMware View instead.

virtual machine

Note lowercase. OK to abbreviate as VM after first use.

See also [VM](#)

virtual private network

Lowercase; can be abbreviated VPN after first complete reference.

VLAN

Abbreviation for “virtual LAN.” No need to spell out.

VM

Acronym for “virtual machine.” Spell out on first use.

See also [virtual machine](#)

VMware

Note capitalization. Include registered trademark symbol (®) on first reference in body text. Avoid using in possessive case.

Original: VMware’s technology is unmatched.

Rewrite: VMware technology is unmatched.

VMware Cloud Management

Use with initial caps to signify VMware product family or platform.

See also [Cloud Management](#)

VMware Journey

Use uppercase when describing the VMware’s framework for upgrading customers from virtualization to software as a service and hybrid cloud.

VPN

Abbreviation for “virtual private network.” Spell out on first use.

vs. (versus)

Latin abbreviation. Use sparingly. Whenever possible, use an alternative such as “against” or “in comparison to.”

VXLAN

Abbreviation for “virtual extensible local area network.” No need to spell out.

web and related terms

The word “web” should not be capitalized unless it is starting a sentence. The phrase World Wide Web takes initial caps in all cases.

The following compound words (one word, lowercase) only take initial caps only when they appear at the beginning of a sentence:

- webcast
- webcam
- weblog
- webmaster
- website
- which

Use “which” for supplementary or parenthetical information that would not change the meaning of the sentence if it were omitted. A “which” clause is always preceded by a comma.

Under host-only networking, a virtual machine is connected to the host on a private network, which normally is not visible outside the host.

Use “that” when the information that follows it is essential for the sentence to be complete and make sense.

The host machine must have one of the processors that VMware Server supports.

See also *that*

whitelist

One word.

white paper

Two words.

Wi-Fi

“W” and “F” are always capped with a hyphen between the first “i” and the “F.”

wrapping

Lowercase unless it is part of a product name like VMware AirWatch App Wrapping.

zero client, zero-client

Takes hyphen when used as an adjective. Use VMware zero clients to access the system.

Customers rely on software vendors for zero-client solutions.

Web content

This section focuses on the specific style issues pertaining to writing and editing for VMware.com and other websites.

Section 1: Web content principles

People read differently online—they scan, they often start in the middle, and they read less. As a result, web writing has developed into a unique discipline. The following five web content principles are important to consider before you get started, especially for anyone who is accustomed to writing print materials.

1. Web content is nonlinear

In print, readers generally follow a linear progression through copy. Online, users navigate through multiple hyperlinked pages in the sequence of their choosing. Users no longer automatically enter your website through your home page, or through a predetermined path that you set for them. They now target specific information within a website via search engines. This underscores the need to ensure that each page provides a consistent brand experience and can stand alone, without depending on information on adjacent pages.

2. Web content is collaborative

Written copy, design, and technology all work together on a website. To make this happen effectively, the content team should be familiar with the technology that operates the back end of the website. Understanding the basic concepts of how websites work visually is helpful when organizing and presenting information. It's a good idea to schedule regular meetings among the content, design, and technology teams so that each group can understand the needs of the others.

3. Web content must be up to date

Web content can become stale quickly. Keep in mind that your website is an extension of your company's brand and personality. A process for reviewing content regularly is essential for staying fresh and ensuring that your website is still relevant to your customers' needs. Plan to conduct a site review every six months.

4. Web content must be concise and easy to scan

Despite advances in monitor resolution, reading on a monitor is much harder on the eyes than reading on paper. Usability experts find that 79 percent of users scan web pages rather than reading them word for word. Eye-tracking studies also show that online readers tend to skim over large blocks of text. You can help online readers absorb your information more easily by writing succinctly; making text scannable by using bullets, numbered lists, and so on; and avoiding long paragraphs.

5. Online, the reader is in control

In print, the author controls the experience, managing the sequence and even the speed with which the story unfolds. Online, you have no such control. Many experts estimate that a web page has 10 seconds or less to engage a casual browser. After that, if users don't feel the page meets their needs, they're gone. In this respect, online readers act more like television viewers than readers of books or newspapers. We even use the same verb—surf—to describe the actions of browsing web pages and clicking through television channels. So think of your web audience as channel surfers, remote control in hand, and make sure you serve up something of interest quickly.

Section 2: Best practices: How to write for an online audience

Writing web-friendly copy:

- Write for the audience – Who are they? What are their concerns? What information do they need to make a decision?
- Focus on features – Extensive user research has shown that your customers primarily want to know specific and detailed information about VMware products and solutions. Avoid marketing fluff and hone in on features and “how it works” information.
- Weave in keywords – Include your keywords in the page description, subheads, and body copy, but don’t add so many that the text sounds clunky. (See Section 3: Search engine optimization.)
- Include calls to action – Always give your users the opportunity to do something next. Do you want them to read more information? Contact a member of the VMware sales team? But don’t provide more than two calls to action, to avoid giving users too many choices.
- Tighten up your text – Take it from Dr. Seuss, who said, “So the writer who breeds more words than he needs, is making a chore for the reader who reads.” Shorten lists (five to seven bullets should be the maximum) and omit needless words and repetition.
- Keep it evergreen – If the content isn’t updated for a year, will it hold up? Are there references that you can omit that would make it feel more evergreen? For example, be careful about including dates or figures on a page that may not be updated on a regular basis.
- Copyedit your content – Make sure your review process includes copyediting. Grammar and spelling errors look unprofessional, impede reading, and undermine your credibility.
- Think globally – VMware.com has an international audience, so write with them in mind. Avoid or limit use of abbreviations, special symbols, slang, and jargon, which won’t easily translate.

Writing display copy

Display copy includes headlines, decks, subheads, captions, and promotional units. It can also include the first sentence of text, which on some websites appears in a larger font or color.

Display copy is important for a few reasons: It creates a hierarchy (telling your readers what to read first), it provides multiple entry points into the content, and it contributes to voice and identity through its consistency. General guidelines include:

- Using strong verbs and concrete nouns
- Using active voice
- Writing in simple, straightforward language

Writing headlines and subheads

Headlines on VMware.com are clear and to the point, and they include active verbs whenever possible. Examples include “Virtualize Your IT Infrastructure” and “Build Knowledge and Expertise Through VMware Training Offerings.” These straightforward headlines are appropriate because

- VMware.com is a corporate website.
- They provide users with a sense of place on the website.
- Clarity is more important than being clever.
- They improve search results (see Section 3: Search engine optimization).

Style

Every word of a headline is capitalized, with the exception of articles, conjunctions, and prepositions fewer than five letters. The first word of a headline is always capitalized, even if it's an article or a preposition.

Using questions in headlines, in subheads, and at the beginning of body copy can be an effective way to draw readers in, but using this technique too often can make your site copy feel repetitive. Before using a question in a headline or at the start of your body copy, do a quick check on VMware.com to see if other pages in your section already start out with a question (or series of questions). As a general rule, use this technique sparingly.

Wayfinding and calls to action

Wayfinding is the process website visitors use to navigate to their intended destination. It's a critical but often overlooked component of design and content creation. The following tips and best practices are intended to help content creators incorporate wayfinding into their website content.

- Be consistent – Format calls to action and other navigational elements consistently so that users will intuitively recognize the functions even as they're processing the language.
- Optimize links and wayfinding copy – Sometimes “Learn more” and “Request more information” are the correct calls to action, but don't automatically default to these phrases. Instead, use terms that indicate a specific action or outcome. Try to include a keyword, which will improve SEO. Here are some examples:
 - Download “Aligning CFO and CIO Priorities” today.
 - Register for the webcast.
 - Register for the cloud infrastructure white paper.
 - Request a consultation.
 - Request a workstation upgrade.
 - Email me vSphere for SMB information.
 - Watch our virtualization overview video now.
 - Listen to our PowerShell podcasts.
 - Try VMware vShield App now
- Create urgency – Words like now, today, and instantly compel users to act.
- Capitalize correctly – Use title case in calls to action with one or two words (Watch, Watch Now); use sentence case with three or more words (Download the video today.)
- Use inline links properly – Inline links are an effective way to direct users to related content, but use them thoughtfully, as each inline link has the potential to distract your user away from the content on the page. General rules for inline links are
 - Stay relevant – Including irrelevant or unrelated links undermines the credibility of your content. Keep links relevant and contextual to maintain readers' interest and trust.
 - Always bold or underline the link – Underlining or bolding (but not both!) inline links is an accepted web usability practice. Links need to stand out from the rest of the copy, so highlighting them visually is important.
 - Use color – Choose two colors for links: one to show an active state and one to show a selected state. This, too, is an accepted web usability practice. Consult the VMware Corporate Brand Guidelines for specific questions about the brand color palette.

- Strong terms
 - Download
 - Register
 - Listen
 - Email me
 - Watch
 - View
 - Try
 - Upgrade
 - Share
 - Numbers (5 Tips, 10 Ways)
 - Product names
- Weaker terms
 - Read more
 - Learn more
 - Request information
 - Click here (also Click this, Click now)
 - Link here (also Link now)

Section 3: Search engine optimization

Metadata

Metadata describes the central ideas and conveys the content of a web page. Metadata helps search engines determine whether your pages are relevant to a search. Metadata can also be used to implement personalization, target e-marketing campaigns, and provide other features that improve customers' online experience.

The most common types of metadata are title tags, description tags, and keyword tags.

Note that the following recommendations for search engine optimization (SEO) apply to English-language pages only.

Title tag

The title tag, the words that appear at the top of a web browser, is perhaps the most important of the meta tags. A title tag usually becomes the text link to the page found in search engine listings, and search engines pay special attention to the title text when indexing pages. The title tag should describe the main topic of your page, much as a headline describes what an article is about.

Guidelines: Lead with “VMware” most of the time. The tag must be unique to each page, product name, or solution and should include a key phrase or two. If a product rename occurs, use the old name at the end in parentheses for up to three months to avoid losing search traffic. The same guidelines apply to acquisitions.

Character count: 65 characters or less, including spaces

Style: Headline style (capitalize all words, with the exception of articles, conjunctions, and prepositions fewer than five letters)

Example: VMware vCloud Director: Private Cloud Computing Infrastructure

Description tag

The description tag is a complete sentence (or two) that usually appears just below the title tag in search results and describes the content available on that page in a concise but inviting way. The goal is to entice users to click a link that is presented to them in a list of Internet or intrasite search results.

Note: Google generally pulls the meta description for its “search snippets,” the term it uses for the text it displays. However, search snippet results depend heavily on the term(s) for which a user searched for. If a search term is better represented in the body text of the web page, for example, Google will pull contextual sentences that appear near that word and display that text—either instead of or in addition to the meta description.

Guidelines: The description must be unique, concise, and specific, with the most important information presented first. It should contain copy that makes sense when read out of context of the section or site. Don't use the same description for all pages or documents in a section or reuse the title tag as the description.

Create a different description for each page, based on the content, even when the content is similar. This includes blog posts. Note that while the description tag does not affect page rank, it has a big impact on click-through rates, so write to the user.

Character count: 150 characters, including spaces

Style: Sentence style (capitalize only the first word and any brand names)

Example

Original: Deliver IT as a service and reduce costs with a self-managed virtual infrastructure. Gain greater efficiency and agility while retaining control and freedom of choice. Move to cloud computing with VMware virtualization of desktops, applications, and servers.

Rewrite: Deliver IT as a service and reduce costs with a self-managed virtual infrastructure from VMware. Move to cloud computing with VMware virtualization.

Keywords and keyword tag

At one time, the meta keyword tag allowed you to provide additional text for search engines to index. Today, in response to the tactic of keyword stuffing, Google ignores meta keywords entirely. Yahoo and Ask.com both index meta keywords, but their systems assign little significance to the keywords. Most SEO experts agree that it's more important to improve the title tag, headline, and first paragraph of your body copy. That said, you won't be penalized for having (a reasonable number of) meta keywords, and keywords do serve a purpose: They can provide VMware.com contributors with guidance about the words or phrases to emphasize in the body copy of your page.

When creating body copy, you should keep a couple of things in mind regarding keywords. First, always write for users, not search engines. Google, in particular, rewards high-quality, compelling content. While content dense with relevant, natural keywords is well-advised, don't simply stuff content for the sake of gaining the SEO upper hand. Doing this makes copy seem awkward, spam like, and less credible. Second, use relevant keywords that site visitors would naturally use. For example, "running shoe" is better than "athletic footwear," and "shampoo" is better than "hair cleanser."

Keyword guidelines: Start your keyword list by thinking like a customer. What terms would you use to search for information on your solutions, products, or services? Your keywords should be precise, focused words or short phrases (also referred to as long-tail keywords) that customers might use when looking for the kind of information you have on your web page. Keep in mind that internal VMware terms do not make good keywords.

Several tools can help you develop your keyword list. For example, use the Google AdWords keyword tool to check the competitiveness of the keyword(s) you're considering. The goal is to use a keyword that's less competitive, because if there's less content out there using a particular keyword, your content has a better chance of being seen. That's why SEO experts often recommend using long-tail keywords—they tend to be less competitive and to better reflect how customers search.

VMware uses BrightEdge to track the rankings and share of voice for the current list of target keyword phrases for search engine optimization. These phrases are grouped according to product families and solutions, as well as business units. Phrases can exist in more than one group at a time, so you might find a term under a product group like vFabric as well as a business group like Enterprise—CAP. Your web marketing manager should have access to BrightEdge to see the latest terms, and managers also have a spreadsheet that maps targeted phrases to products. This list is continuously being reviewed, so ask for an updated list of targeted phrases during website updates.

As with all good web writing, avoid using jargon, clichés, or slang in your keywords. Concentrate on the key concepts you want to convey.

Keywords should:

- Be unique to that page
- Include specific terms that describe the content of the page (or web section if the document is a home page)
- Use variations of common words (plural/singular, verb tenses, etc.)
- Contain terms used by the customer
- Be separated by semicolons or commas
- Be lowercase

Word count: Aim for three specific, well-chosen keywords.

Style: Lowercase all keywords, except for brand names.

Example: open source email, shared calendar for Linux, shared calendar for Mac (from VMware Zimbra page)

URLs

Include keywords in URLs, selecting the most relevant keyword for that page when creating the URL. For example, if the page is about VMware Workstation Player™ software, “vmware.com/workstation player” is more relevant than “vmware.com/virtual-machine-software-suite,” even though those keywords may also be included in the content. Use no more than three hyphens, which are treated as spaces. Note that VMware URLs are not localized; they are in English only.

Authoritative linking

Increasingly, search engines are considering a website’s inbound links when determining page rank. Inbound links, or “backlinks,” are links on third-party websites that lead to your web page or content. These backlinks are seen as a “vote” for your website, and when coming from an authoritative site with trusted content, they raise the relevance and authority of your site. It is important to build inbound links to increase your site’s page rank and to build these links on industry-related, credible websites with quality content. Building backlinks to VMware blog posts would be an effective way to improve search engine optimization. Links on credible external blogs and on social media sites can help SEO as well. For more information on link building, check out these resources:

- [SEO Link Building Strategies](#)
- [11 Guidelines for Getting Authoritative Links](#)

SEO resources

SEO best practices are constantly evolving. To keep up on the latest information, check out these websites:

- [Search Engine Land](#)
- [Search Engine Watch](#)
- [SEOMO](#)



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