

xCAT 2 Cookbook for Linux on IBM System P

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1. Introduction

This cookbook introduces how to use the xCAT2 to install Linux on the IBM power system machines.

The power system machines have the following characteristics:

1. May have multiple LPARs (an LPAR will be the target machine to install an operating system image on, i.e. the LPAR will be the compute node);
2. The Ethernet card and SCSI disk can be virtual devices;
3. An HMC or IVM is used for the HCP (hardware control point)

xCAT supports two types of installations for compute nodes: Diskful installation (Stateful) and Diskless (Stateless). xCAT also supports hierarchical management clusters where one or more service nodes are used to handle the installation and management of compute nodes. Please refer to [xCAT2advanced.pdf](#) for hierarchical usage.

Based on the two types of installation, the following installation scenarios will be described in this document:

1. Install a stateful compute node
2. Install a stateless compute node

To provide the easier understanding of the installation steps, this cookbook provides an example to introduce the xCAT management operations:

The management node:

```
Arch: an LPAR on a p5/p6 machine
OS: Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5.2
Hostname: pmanagenode
IP: 192.168.0.1
HCP: HMC
```

The management Network:

```
Net: 192.168.0.0
NetMask: 255.255.255.0
Gateway: 192.168.0.1
Cluster-face-IF: eth1
dhcpserver: 192.168.0.1
tftpserver: 192.168.0.1
nameservers: 192.168.0.1
```

The compute nodes:

```
Arch: an LPAR on a p5/p6 machine
OS: Red Hat Enterprise Linux 5.2
HCP: HMC
```

```
Hostname: pnode1 - this node will be installed in
stateful
IP: 192.168.0.10
Cluster-face-IF: eth0
```

```
Hostname: pnode2 - this node will be installed in
stateless
IP: 192.168.0.20
Cluster-face-IF: eth0
```

The Hardware Control Point:

```
Name: hmc1
IP: 192.168.0.100
```

```
xCAT version:
xCAT-2.1+
```

2. Install xCAT 2 on the Management node

Before proceeding to setup your pLinux Cluster, you should first read [xCAT2top](#) for information on downloading and installing xCAT on your Management Node. Some xCAT database tables will be used in the following chapters, you can refer to [xcatdb manpage](#) for more details on xCAT database tables.

3. Setup the management node

3.1. [Power 5] Workaround the atftpd issue

The tftp client in the open firmware of p5 is only compatible with tftp-server instead of atftpd which is required by xCAT2. So we have to remove the atftpd first and then install the tftp-server. This is not required for POWER or later.

3.1.1. Remove atftpd

```
service tftpd stop
rpm --nodeps -e atftpd
```

3.1.2. Install the tftp server needed by xCAT, and restart it

[RH]:

```
yum install tftp-server.ppc
```

[SLES]:

```
zypper install tftp-server.ppc
```

3.1.3. Restart the tftp server

Notes: make sure the entry "disable=no" in the /etc/xinetd.d/tftp.

```
service xinetd restart
```

3.2. Setup common attributes for xCAT in the database

The xCAT database table “passwd” contains default userids and passwords for xCAT to access cluster components. This section will describe how to set the default userids and passwords for system and hmc in xCAT database table.

3.2.1. Add the default account for system

```
chtab key=system passwd.username=root passwd.password=cluster
```

3.2.2. Add the default account for hmc

```
chtab key=hmc passwd.username=hscroot passwd.password=abc123
```

Note: The username and password for xCAT to access the HMCs can be specified through mkdef or chdef command, this is useful especially when some specific HMCs use the different username and password with the default ones. For example:

```
mkdef -t node -o hmc1 groups=hmc,all nodetype=hmc mgt=hmc
      username=hscroot password=abc1234
```

```
chdef -t node -o hmc1 username=hscroot password=abc1234
```

3.3. Define the compute nodes

The definition of a node is stored in several tables of the xCAT database.

You can use **rscan** command to discover the HCP to get the nodes that managed by this HCP. The discovered nodes can be stored into a stanza file. Then edit the stanza file to keep the nodes which you want to create and use the mkdef command to create the nodes definition.

3.3.1. Gather Node information using the rscan command

3.3.1.1. Define HMC as an xCAT node

First, define the hardware control point as a node object.

The following command will create an xCAT node definition for an HMC with a host name of “*hmc1*”. The *groups*, *nodetype*, *mgt*, *username*, and *password* attributes will be set.

```
mkdef -t node -o hmc1 groups=hmc,all nodetype=hmc mgt=hmc
      username=hscroot password=abc123
```

to change and add new groups:

```
chdef -t node -o hmc1 groups=hmc,rack1,all
```

to verify your data:

```
lsdef -l hmc1
```

3.3.1.2. Discover the LPARs managed by HMC

Run the **rscan** command to gather the LPAR information. This command can be used to display the LPAR information in several formats and can also write the LPAR

information directly to the xCAT database. In this example we will use the “-z” option to create a stanza file that contains the information gathered by **rscan** as well as some default values that could be used for the node definitions.

To write the stanza format output of **rscan** to a file called “node.stanza” run the following command.

```
rscan -z hmc01 > node.stanza
```

This file can then be checked and modified as needed. For example you may need to add a different name for the node definition or add additional attributes and values.

***Note:** The stanza file will contain stanzas for things other than the LPARs. This information must also be defined in the xCAT database. The stanza will repeat the same bpa information for multiple fsp(s). It is not necessary to modify the non-LPAR stanzas in any way.*

The stanza file will look something like the following.

Server-9117-MMA-SN10F6F3D:

```
objtype=node
nodetype=fsp
id=5
model=9118-575
serial=02013EB
hcp=hmc01
pprofile=
parent=Server-9458-10099201WM_A
groups=fsp,all
mgt=hmc
```

pnode1:

```
objtype=node
nodetype=lpar,osi
id=9
hcp=hmc1
pprofile=lpar9
parent=Server-9117-MMA-SN10F6F3D
groups=all
mgt=hmc
cons=hmc
```

pnode2:

```
objtype=node
nodetype=lpar,osi
id=7
hcp=hmc1
pprofile=lpar6
parent=Server-9117-MMA-SN10F6F3D
groups=all
mgt=hmc
cons=hmc
```

***Note:** The **rscan** command supports an option to automatically create node definitions in the xCAT database. To do this the LPAR name gathered by **rscan** is used as the node*

name and the command sets several default values. If you use the “-w” option, make sure the LPAR name you defined will be the name you want used as your node name.

For a node which was defined correctly before, you can use the “lsdef -z [nodename]> node.stanza” command to export the definition into the node.stanza, and use command “cat node.stanza | chdef -z” to update the node.stanza according to your need.

3.3.1.3. Define xCAT node using the stanza file

The information gathered by the **rscan** command can be used to create xCAT node definitions by running the following command:

```
cat node.stanza | mkdef -z
```

Verify the data:

```
lsdef -t node -l all
```

3.3.2. Update the attributes of the node

3.3.2.1. Set the resource attributes of the node

```
chdef -t node -o pnode1 netboot=yaboot tftpserver=192.168.0.1  
nfssserver=192.168.0.1 monserver=192.168.0.1 xcatmaster=192.168.0.1  
installnic="eth0" primarynic="eth0"
```

Note: Please make sure the attributes "installnic" and "primarynic" are set up by the correct Ethernet Interface of compute node. Otherwise the compute node installation may hang on requesting information from an incorrect interface.

3.3.2.2. Set the type attributes of the node

[RH]

```
chdef -t node -o pnode1 os=<os> arch=ppc64 profile=compute.ppc64
```

[SLSE]

```
chdef -t node -o pnode1 os=<os> arch=ppc64 profile=compute
```

Note: The <os> can be rh, centos*, fedora*, sles*. (where * is the version #) For example, the <os> can be rhels5.2 or sles11.*

3.3.2.3. Setting up to run post install scripts

This only needs to be done when you want to run the my_script after installing the compute node.

```
chdef -t node -o pnode1 postscripts=my_script
```

See the [Advanced Linux Cookbook](#) “Customize Your Node By Creating Your Own Postscripts” appendix for more information on how to setup postinstall scripts.

3.4. Setup the Services and Definition

The part should be experienced, when there are compute nodes, hmcs, networks defined/ deleted.

3.4.1. Setup the networks table

Create the networks that used for cluster management:

```
mkdef -t network -o net1 net=192.168.0.0 mask=255.255.255.0
gateway=192.168.0.1 mgtifname=eth1 dhcpserver=192.168.0.1
tftpserver=192.168.0.1 nameservers=192.168.0.1
```

3.4.2. Setup Name Resolution

3.4.2.1. Setup /etc/hosts with entries for all you nodes, hmcs, fsp

```
127.0.0.1          localhost
192.168.0.1       pmanagenode
192.168.0.10     pnode1
192.168.0.20     pnode2
192.168.0.100    hmcl
```

3.4.2.2. Setup the nameserver

Add following lines into /etc/resolv.conf

```
search cluster.net
nameserver 192.168.0.1
```

3.4.2.3. Setup the DNS attributes in the Site table

Setup local machine as nameserver:

```
chdef -t site nameservers=192.168.0.1
```

Setup the external nameserver:

```
chdef -t site forwarders=9.114.1.1
```

Setup the local domain name:

```
chdef -t site domain=cluster.net
```

3.4.2.4. Setup DNS configuration

```
makedns
service named start
chkconfig --level 345 named on
```

3.4.2.5. Updating the DNS configuration

If you add nodes or update the networks table:

```
makedns
service named restart
```

3.4.3. Configure conserver

The xCAT rcons command uses the conserver package to provide support for multiple read-only consoles on a single node and the console logging. For example, if a user has a read-write console session open on node node1, other users could also log in to that console session on node1 as read-only users. This allows sharing a console server

session between multiple users for diagnostic or other collaborative purposes. The console logging function will log the console output and activities for any node with remote console attributes set to file `/var/log/consoles/<node_name>`, the console logging files can be replayed for debugging or any other purpose.

3.4.3.1. Set conserver attributes for the nodes(Optional)

If the `cons` attribute for the nodes is not set by `rscan`, then do the following:

```
chdef -t node -o pnode1 cons=hmc conserver=<management node>
```

Note: `conserver=<management node>` is the default, so it is optional to set.

3.4.3.2. Update conserver configuration

Each xCAT node with remote console attributes set should be added into the conserver configuration file to make the `rcons` work. The xCAT command `makeconservercf` will put all the nodes into conserver configuration file `/etc/conserver.cf` and refresh the conserver daemon. The `makeconservercf` command must be run when there is any node definition changes that will affect the conserver, such as adding new nodes, removing nodes or changing the nodes' remote console settings.

```
makeconservercf
```

3.4.4. Check rcons(3.4.3 and 3.4.4 are MUST to do, rnetboot and getmacs depend on it)

```
rcons pnode1
```

If it works ok, you will get into the console interface of the `pnode1`.

Please run this command to monitor the installation before `getmacs/rnetboot`, otherwise, `rcons` will interrupt `getmacs/rnetboot` procedure.

3.4.5. Update the mac table with the address of the node(s)

If there's only one Ethernet adapter on the node or you have specified the `installnic` or `primarynic` attribute of the node, using following command can get the correct mac address.

```
getmacs pnode1
```

But, if there're more than one Ethernet adapters on the node, and you don't know which one has been configured for the installation process, you have to specify more parameters like this for `Lpar` to try to figure out an available interface by ping operation:

```
getmacs pnode1 -S 192.168.0.1 -G 192.168.0.1 -C 192.168.0.10
```

The output looks like following:

```
pnode1:
```

Type	Location Code	MAC Address	Full Path Name	Ping Result
ent	U9133.55A.10E093F-V4-C5-T1	f2:60:f0:00:40:05	/vdevice/1-lan@30000005	virtual

And the Mac address will be written into the xCAT mac table.

Warning: Before run getmacs, make sure the node is off. If not, please force the lpar shutdown with “rpower pnode1 off” command. The reason is that HMC has one issue that cannot shutdown linux nodes which is in running state.

3.4.6. Check rpower is working on the node

```
rpower pnode1 stat
```

3.4.7. Setup dhcp service

3.4.7.1. Setup the dhcp listen interfaces in site table

```
chdef -t site dhcpinterfaces='pmanagenode|eth1'
```

3.4.7.2. [SLES] Check the installation of dhcp-server

On the SLES management node, the dhcp-server rpm may not have been automatically installed. Use following command to check whether it has been installed:

```
rpm -qa | grep -E "^dhcp-server"
```

If it is not installed, installed it manually:

```
zypper install dhcp-server
```

3.4.7.3. Configure the DHCP

Add the relevant networks into the DHCP configuration:

```
makedhcp -n
```

Add the defined nodes into the DHCP configuration:

```
makedhcp -a
```

Restart the dhcp service:

```
service dhcpd restart
```

Note: Please make sure there is only one dhcpd server can serv these compute nodes.

4. Install a Compute Node

4.1. Prepare the installation source

You can use the iso file of the installed OS to extract the installation files. For example, you have a iso file /iso/RHEL5.2-Server-20080430.0-ppc-DVD.iso

```
copycdfs /iso/RHEL5.2-Server-20080430.0-ppc-DVD.iso
```

Note: If you encounter the issue that the iso cannot be mounted by the copycds command. Make sure the SELinux is disabled.

4.2. Statefull Node installation

4.2.1. Customize the install profile

xCAT uses KickStart or AutoYaST installation profile and related installation scripts to complete the installation and configuration of the compute node.

You can find the template and sample profiles in following directories:

```
/opt/xcat/share/xcat/install/<os>/
```

Commonly for installing the ppc64 compute node, you can use the compute profile.

If you want to customize the profile for compute node like <profile>.myprofile, you can copy the compute to the following directory, and make your modification base on it.

```
/install/custom/install/<os>/
```

Note: The profile name in the <profile> can be set to certain compute node by following command:

```
chdef -t node -o pnode1 profile=<profile>
```

4.2.1.1. Install other specific packages

If you want to install the specific package like specific.rpm onto the compute node, copy the specific.rpm into the following directory:

```
/install/post/otherpkgs/<os>/<arch>
```

4.2.2. Set the node status to ready for installation

```
nodeset pnode1 install
```

4.2.3. Use network boot to start the installation

```
rnetboot pnode1
```

4.2.4. Check the installation results

1. Check that ssh service on the node is working and you can login without password
2. If ssh is working but cannot login without password, force exchange the ssh key to the compute node using xdsh:

```
xdsh pnode1 -K
```

After exchanging ssh key, following command should work.

```
xdsh pnode1 date
```

4.3. Stateless node installation

4.3.1. Generate the stateless image for compute node

Typically, you can build your stateless compute node image on the Management Node if it will have the same OS and architecture with the node. If you need another OS image or architecture than the OS installed on the Management Node, you will need a machine

that meets the OS and architecture you want for the image and create the image on that node.

4.3.1.1. Make the compute node packaging list

If you want to exclude certain package, add it into the following exist file:
/install/custom/netboot/<os>/<profile>.exist

Add the packages name that need to be installed on the stateless node into the pkglist file
/install/custom/netboot/<os>/<profile>.pkglist

Note: you can use the sample here: /opt/xcat/share/xcat/netboot/<os>/

[RH]:

Add following packages name into the <profile>.pkglist

```
bash
nfs-utils
stunnel
dhclient
kernel
openssh-server
openssh-clients
busybox-anaconda
wget
vim-minimal
ntp
```

You can add any other packages that you want to install on your compute node. For example, if you want to have users with passwords you should add the following:

```
cracklib
libuser
passwd
```

[SLES11]:

Add following packages name into the <profile>.pkglist

```
aaa_base
bash
nfs-utils
dhcpcd
kernel
openssh
psmisc
wget
sysconfig
syslog-ng
klogd
vim
```

4.3.1.2. Run image generation

[RHEL]:

```
cd /opt/xcat/share/xcat/netboot/rh
./genimage -i eth0 -n ibmveth -o rhels5.2 -p compute
```

[SLES11]:

```
cd /opt/xcat/share/xcat/netboot/sles
./genimage -i eth0 -n ibmveth -o sles11 -p compute
```

4.3.1.3. Pack the image

[RHEL]:

```
packimage -o rhels5.2 -p compute -a ppc64
```

[SLES]:

```
packimage -o sles11 -p compute -a ppc64
```

4.3.2. Set the node status ready for network boot

```
nodeset pnode2 netboot
```

4.3.3. Use network boot to start the installation

```
rnetboot pnode2
```

4.3.4. Check the installation result

1. Check that ssh service on the node is working and you can login without password
2. If ssh is working but cannot login without password, force exchange the ssh key to the compute node using xdsh:

```
xdsh pnode1 -K
```

After exchanging ssh key, following command should work.

```
xdsh pnode1 date
```

5. Firmware upgrade

5.1. Requirements

POWER5 and POWER6 Licensed Internal Code updates must meet the following prerequisites:

5.1.1. Enable the HMC to allow remote ssh connections.

[AIX]

Ensure that ssh is installed on the AIX xCAT management node. If you are using an AIX management node, make sure the value of "useSSHonAIX" is "yes" in the site table.

```
chtab key="useSSHonAIX" site.value=yes
```

5.1.2. Define the necessary attributes

The Lpar , CEC, or BPA has been defined in the nodelist, nodehm, nodetype, vpd, ppc tables.

5.1.3. Define the HMC as a node

Define the HMC as a node on the management node. For example,

```
nodeadd hmc01.clusters.com groups=hmc
```

5.1.4. Setup SSH connection to HMC

Run the `rspconfig` command to set up and generate the ssh keys on the xCAT management node and transfer the public key to the HMC. You must also manually configure the HMC to allow remote ssh connections. For example:

```
rspconfig hmc01.clusters.com sshcfg=enable
```

5.1.5. Get the Microcode update package and associated XML file

Download the Microcode update package and associated XML file from the IBM Web site: <http://www14.software.ibm.com/webapp/set2/firmware/gjsn>.

5.2. Perform Firmware upgrade for CEC on P5/P6

5.2.1. Define the CEC as a node on the management node

Update the xCAT required xCAT tables:

Modify the `nodelist` table

```
nodeadd Server-m_tmp-SNs_tmp groups=hmc,all
```

Modify the table `nodehm`

```
chtab node="Server-m_tmp-SNs_tmp" nodehm.mgt="hmc"
```

Modify the table `nodetype`:

```
chtab node="Server-m_tmp-SNs_tmp" nodetype.nodetype="fsp"
```

Modify the table `ppc`:

```
chtab node="Server-m_tmp-SNs_tmp" ppc.hcp=hmc01.clusters.com
```

Modify the tab `vpd`:

```
chtab node=Server-m_tmp-SNs_tmp vpd.serial=s_tmp  
vpd.mtm=m_tmp
```

Set the account of the HMC(Modify the `ppchcp`):

```
chtab hcp=hmc01.clusters.com ppchcp.username=hscroot  
ppchcp.password=abc123
```

5.2.2. Setup SSH connection to HMC

Generate the ssh keys on the xCAT management node and transfer the public key to the HMC to configure the HMC to allow remote ssh connections.

```
rspconfig hmc01.clusters.com sshcfg=enable
```

5.2.3. Check firmware level

```
rinv Server-m_tmp-SNs_tmp firm
```

5.2.4. Update the firmware

Download the Microcode update package and associated XML file from the IBM Web site: <http://www14.software.ibm.com/webapp/set2/firmware/gjsn>. Create the /tmp/fw directory, if necessary, and copy the downloaded files to the /tmp/fw directory.

Run the rflash command with the --activate flag to specify the update mode to perform the updates. (Please see the “rflash” manpage for more information)

```
rflash Server-m_tmp-SNs_tmp -p /tmp/fw --activate  
disruptive
```

NOTE: You Need check your update is concurrent or disruptive here!! other commands sample:

```
rflash Server-m_tmp-SNs_tmp -p /tmp/fw --activate  
concurrent
```

Notes:

- 1) If the noderange is the group lpar, the upgrade steps are the same as the CEC's.
- 2) System p5 and p6 updates can require time to complete and there is no visual indication that the command is proceeding.

5.3. Perform Firmware upgrades for BPA on P5/P6

5.3.1. Define the BPA as a node on the management node

Update the xCAT tables:

Modify the nodelist table. Define the BPA as a node

```
nodeadd Server-m_tmpps_tmp groups=hmc,all
```

Modify the table nodehm

```
chtab node="Server-m_tmpps_tmp" nodehm.mgt="hmc"
```

Modify the table nodetype:

```
chtab node="Server-m_tmpps_tmp" nodetype.nodetype="fsp"
```

Modify the table ppc:

```
chtab node="Server-m_tmpps_tmp" ppc.hcp= hmc01.clusters.com  
ppc.id=x
```

Modify the tab vpd:

```
chtab node=Server-m_tmpps_tmp vpd.serial=s_tmp vpd.mtm=m_tmp
```


Set the account of the HMC(Modify the ppchcp):

```
chtab hcp=hmc01.clusters.com ppchcp.username=hscroot  
ppchcp.password=abc123
```

5.3.2. Setup SSH connection to HMC

Generate the ssh keys on the xCAT management node and transfer the public key to the HMC to configure the HMC to allow remote ssh connections.

```
rspconfig hmc01.clusters.com sshcfg=enable
```

5.3.3. User rinv to check the firmware level (see rinv manpage)

```
rinv Server-m_tmpps_tmp firm
```

5.3.4. Update the firmware

Download the Microcode update package and associated XML file from the IBM Web site:

<http://www14.software.ibm.com/webapp/set2/firmware/gjsn>

Create the /tmp/fw directory, if necessary, and copy the downloaded files to the /tmp/fw directory.

Run the rflash command with the --activate flag to specify the update mode to perform the updates.

```
rflash Server-m_tmpps_tmp -p /tmp/fw --activate disruptive
```

NOTE: You Need check your update is concurrent or disruptive here!! other commands sample:

```
rflash Server-m_tmpps_tmp -p /tmp/fw --activate concurrent
```

5.4. Commit currently activated LIC update(copy T to P) for a CEC/BPA on p5/p6

5.4.1. Check firmware level

Refer to the environment setup in the section 'Firmware upgrade for CEC on P5/P6' to make sure the firmware version is correct.

5.4.2. Commit the firmware LIC

Run the rflash command with the --commit flag.

```
rflash Server-m_tmp-SNs_tmp --commit
```

Notes:

(1)If the noderange is Lpar, the commit steps are the same as the CEC's.

(2) When the `--commit` or `--recover` two flags is used, the `noderange` cannot be `BPA`. It only can be `CEC` or `LPAR`, and will take effect for both managed systems and power subsystems.

6. References

- xCAT web site: <http://xcat.sf.net/>
- xCAT man pages: <http://xcat.sf.net/man1/xcat.1.html>
- xCAT DB table descriptions: <http://xcat.sf.net/man5/xcatdb.5.html>
- Installing xCAT on iDataPlex: <http://xcat.svn.sourceforge.net/svnroot/xcat/xcat-core/trunk/xCAT-client/share/doc/xCAT-iDpx.pdf>
- xCAT2 Advanced Linux Cookbook : <http://xcat.svn.sourceforge.net/svnroot/xcat/xcat-core/trunk/xCAT-client/share/doc/xCAT2advanced.pdf>
- For installing Torque and Moab :
<http://xcat.svn.sourceforge.net/svnroot/xcat/xcat-core/trunk/xCAT-client/share/doc/xCAT2.pdf>
- Using LDAP for user authentication in your cluster:
<http://xcat.svn.sourceforge.net/svnroot/xcat/xcat-core/trunk/xCAT-client/share/doc/xCAT2.ldap.pdf>
- Monitoring Your Cluster with xCAT:
<http://xcat.svn.sourceforge.net/svnroot/xcat/xcat-core/trunk/xCAT-client/share/doc/xCAT2-Monitoring.pdf>
- xCAT on AIX Cookbook: <http://xcat.svn.sourceforge.net/svnroot/xcat/xcat-core/trunk/xCAT-client/share/doc/xCAT2onAIX.pdf>
- xCAT wiki: <http://xcat.wiki.sourceforge.net/>
- xCAT mailing list: <http://xcat.org/mailman/listinfo/xcat-user>
- xCAT bugs: https://sourceforge.net/tracker/?group_id=208749&atid=1006945
- xCAT feature requests: https://sourceforge.net/tracker/?group_id=208749&atid=1006948