

# The Astronaut VistA Installer Suite

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# The Astronaut VistaA Installer Suite

- After 6 months of Intracare and massive political change, the need for a standard installation modality became apparent.
  - Little practice informed by 'the real world.'
  - Basics available at VA not in private sector.
  - Difficult, disorganized, client install.
  - Many things not working 'out of the box.'
  - Best practices available but not easily.

# The Astronaut VistaA Installer Suite

- Many 'chores'.
- Some nearly impossible things for those not familiar with Unix/Linux, the innards of Windows, and even those familiar.
- Where to put things? 'Anywhere' is not a good answer.
- Un-necessary burdens on nearly everyone doing 'things not worth doing.'  
Box:Volume pair anyone?

# Astronaut: Specific Goals

- Installation of a VistA in an hour or less.
- VistA system capable of doing something 'clinically useful' like a note.
- Security.
- Ancillary but important issues like backup, server startup and shutdown.
- Novel management software for infrequent activities
  - the 'GTM prompt gap'.
  - VistA distro co-existence.

# The Astronaut VistA Installer Suite: Specific Goals

- Encapsulation of community lore and best practices with community input.
- Teachability/Documentability.
- Reproducibility/Testability/Destructability.
- Novel applications.
- Conservation of time and effort of limited VistA expert resource time.
- Attract developer interest.
  - 'Hello world' in an hour, not 6-8 weeks.

# The Astronaut VistaA Installer Suite: Specific Goals

The Astronaut Name? Building Harlequin's  
Moon

Go Out of Control.

On Purpose.

Really.

# The Response

- Can you do the vast majority of a installation specification in a week (5 days really)?
- Yes but you have to have help.
- Over 200 comments on hardhats, 12 drafts and a vote and a half.
- Nearly all existing solutions examined.
- VistA Standard Base specification, currently in release candidate 8 form.

# The Response

- Implementation began at the end of January 2009.
- Became apparent that rpm/deb is probably the way to go.
  - Dependency checking, known structure, highly reproducible, little wheel reinvention.
  - Virtual Machines have short-comings.
    - Bulky, difficult to upgrade, reproduce, and understand.
    - rpm/deb makes Virtual Machines easy to build and upgrade.



# The Response

- Apparent: too many chores for newbies and experts to do.
  - pre-load all KIDs patches to run the clients out of the box. Even experts probably appreciate this.
- Also apparent: lots of neat things lying around like Kevin's debugger, Victory Programming Environment, m2web, Ovid, etc. that can and should be rolled in.

# Windows Client Installation

- Did not show Vista richness.
- Un-natural acts: Unzipping and CCOW=DISABLE in Properties.
- Disorganized.
- Multiple downloads from multiple sources.  
Multiple different installation methods.
- Many clients not working 'out of the box'.
- Chore for even experienced users.
- No code, no un-install, no vehicle for new clients.

# Windows Client Installation: The Response

- Nullsoft Installer (NSIS) generator is Open Source and BETTER than proprietary generators.
- Text clients are setup in a reasonable, secure way.
- Older auto-installed clients reverse-engineered and rolled into one (or two) selectable installers.
- All necessary KIDs installed and obvious bugs fixed.

# Windows Client Installation: The Response

- Fast.
- Client software installed into Program Files/Vista in an organized way.
- No executable folders floating on the Desktop.
- Shortcuts installed in an orderly way on Start menu and Desktop.
- Works with Active Directory/Enterprise.
- Un-install!

# Windows Client Installation: The Result

- Ten useful Windows clients easily available.
- Richness of Vista exposed.
- Fit and finish issues addressed.
- Get to productive work much faster.
- Satisfies 'point-click' types.

# Astronaut: The Result

- Get on to the 'real stuff':
  - Configuration.
  - Novel applications.
  - Effective training and documentation.
  - Attract new developers and CAC's.
  - Proliferate!
  - Benefit society.

# Astronaut: The Future

- More features.
- More clients.
- More management functions.
- More testing.
  
- Out of Beta WHEN?...