Enabling high performance VNFs with EPA & SDN Assist

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EPA (Enhanced Platform Awareness)

● Covers a set of techniques for getting more performance
● EPA features include:
  ○ NUMA node placement
  ○ CPU Pinning
  ○ Huge Pages
  ○ SR-IOV
● OSM supports these since release 0
  ○ Enabled via the NF descriptor
Non-Uniform Memory Access
- Memory is attached to each CPU’s integrated memory controller
- Memory attached to a memory controller of another CPU is considered remote
- Remote memory access must use the Interconnect to read remote memory

Preventing a process from moving to a different CPU is called CPU Pinning
Most NFVI/VIMs support **CPU Pinning** and **NUMA Topology Awareness** capabilities without any need for configuration.

**CPU Pinning**: being able to pin a VM to specific CPUs

**NUMA Topology Awareness**: making the VM aware of the physical CPU topology
Huge Pages

- Linux kernel maps memory in pages (4k)
- 64 GB RAM = 16,777,216 4k pages
  - Mapping of pages to physical RAM addresses happens in the Translation Lookaside Buffer (TLB)
- TLB is subset of all virtual pages
- Finding memory that is not in TLB is slow
- Recommendation: Huge Pages
  - Changes page size from 4k to something larger
  - Can result in memory waste
**Memory Huge Pages** allows the VNFs to request RAM memory from a special pool where page sizes are bigger, enabling better performance.

Enabling/changing Huge Pages require a node reload, and the NFVI servers to allocate a new memory pool with bigger pages, this will not allow VMs set with normal pages to use this new pool, so it should be limited.
SR-IOV

- Hypervisor must maintain map of which VM sent which packet so response goes to correct VM

- Single Root I/O Virtualization
  - Allows device to appear to be multiple separate physical PCIe devices
    - Physical Function (PF) - the primary function of the device
    - Virtual Function (VF) - associated with PF, shares physical resources of device
  - Bypasses map so lookup is not necessary
SR-IOV allows VNFs to have direct access to a virtualized PCI of a NIC, thus giving it better throughput.

Enabling SR-IOV requires a node reload for reconfiguration of the IOMMU virtualization mode. It also requires physical interfaces to be dedicated to this feature.
OSM and EPA

- OSM supports EPA enablement in Descriptors

  However
  - OSM does not change OpenStack server configuration
  - SR-IOV must already be enabled in the compute node
  - Huge pages must be enabled in the compute node
  - Descriptor must be made aware of NUMA topology
  - OSM does not know:
    - Number of Numa Nodes
    - Number of CPU cores
    - Number of CPUs/threads per core

- All this must be known before launching a service
SDN Assist

● SDN Controller
  ○ Separates the network control functions from forwarding functions
  ○ Creates overlays that exist on top of physical network
  ○ Manages flow control of switches “under” the overlay

● OSM currently supports:
  ○ Arista Cloudvision
  ○ Floodlight OpenFlow
  ○ Juniper Contrail
  ○ OpenDaylight (ODL) OpenFlow
  ○ ONOS (OpenFlow or VPLS)
Using Virtual Interfaces (VIRTIO)

- Physical interfaces used for transporting "tunnels" only require IP connectivity.
- VXLAN Tunnels (controlled by the VIM).
- vSwitches like OVS have limited performance (~1Gbps), unless OVS-DPDK or similar techniques are used (~10Gbps).
SR-IOV and Passsthrough features expose the instance directly to the physical NIC, so who takes care of the end-to-end connectivity?
1. OSM orchestrates SR-IOV or Passthrough

   → Proper assignment of I/O physical interfaces to the VM (PFs or VFs = Physical or Virtual Functions)

2. OSM SDN Assist gives the ability to create L2 connections between VFs

   • Interconnecting VMs
   • Attaching external traffic sources
OSM’s SDN Assist feature takes care of the “underlay” connectivity whenever it sees VLDs with SR-IOV or PASSTHROUGH ports that need to connect between each other.

* Supported as of REL7.1.0 → ONOS, Arista, Open Daylight and Floodlight
OSM and SDN Assist

- Like EPA, OSM does not manage SDN Controller or OpenStack
  - Compatible SDNC must be installed
  - Must be reachable from OSM
- Some plugins need additional information
  - Port mapping files for PCI ports
- VIM account must have admin privileges
  - Needs get PCI information
In our example, we could have enabled SR-IOV for the Wiki, to provide the fastest response time for the internal HTTP and Load Balancer services, as well as huge pages for content cache.