

Basic support for new maas metadata format

12 messages

Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com> 4 February 2014 14:52 To: Gavin Panella <gavin.panella@canonical.com>, Scott Moser <scott.moser@canonical.com>, Robie Basak <robie.basak@canonical.com>

```
Hi guys,
```

After a few days of work I came up with the initial (mostly PoC) version of the tool responsible for pulling boot resources described by a new metadata format. In this mail I'd like to discuss some of the design decision that were made and get as much of criticism as possible because it's much simpler to fix most of the issues on this stage.

You can find all the source code here: https://pastebin.canonical.com/104209/ If you know any other way to share the code and make it commentable -please let me know.

```
FINAL VERSION OF THE METADATA FORMAT
```

```
Here is how a typical metadata entry looks like:
```

```
{
<...>
 "products": {
  "com.ubuntu.maas.repo2:boot:14.04:armhf:hwe": {
   "release": "trusty",
   "version": "14.04",
   "arch": "armhf",
   "versions": {
    "20140125": {
     "subarches": "slayton, highbank",
     "items": {
      "boot-kernel": {
       "path": "trusty/armhf/hwe-20140125/kernel",
       "md5": "b2d1236c286a3c0704224fe4105eca49",
       "size": 2097152,
       "ftype": "boot-kernel"
      },
      "boot-initrd": {
       "path": "trusty/armhf/hwe-20140125/initrd",
       "md5": "b2d1236c286a3c0704224fe4105eca49",
       "size": 2097152,
       "ftype": "boot-initrd"
      },
      "di-kernel": {
       "path": "trusty/armhf/hwe-20140125/di-kernel",
       "md5": "b2d1236c286a3c0704224fe4105eca49",
       "size": 2097152,
       "ftype": "di-kernel"
      },
      "di-initrd": {
       "path": "trusty/armhf/hwe-20140125/di-initrd",
       "md5": "b2d1236c286a3c0704224fe4105eca49",
       "size": 2097152,
```

```
"ftype": "di-initrd"
      },
      "disk": {
       "path": "trusty/armhf/hwe-20140125/disk",
       "md5": "b2d1236c286a3c0704224fe4105eca49",
       "size": 2097152,
       "ftype": "disk"
      }
 <...>
}
Please note the following key aspects:
(1.1)
'subarches' field allows you to point out which subset of devices of
the speficic architecture can be booted by this boot resource;
metadata entry which describes generic (release) set of boot resources
will have the longest 'subarches' list
but some devices which are not enabled yet in the mainline will have
separate products which provide information on how to deploy these
machines;
this separate products will have pretty short 'subarches' list because
they are specific to one or two machine types;
(1.2)
'items' section is expandable; some products may provide more boot components
(kernel command line required to boot the machine, kernel device tree
(dtb) required to boot some ARM-based machines and others);
(1.3)
maas should be able to fetch boot resources (and their metadata) from
a set of independent sources
(1.4)
maas should be able to choose which boot resources to use for a
specific machine if multiple resources are available
_____
MAAS CONFIGURATION FILE
_____
We didn't decide yet which configuration file format to use. That's
why my PoC tool has pre-defined configuration options in the following
format:
    config['sources'] = [
        {
            'url': 'file:///home/strikov/maas-playground/boot-resources/repo1/',
            'mask': ['armhf/midway/*']
        },
        {
            'url': 'file:///home/strikov/maas-playground/boot-resources/repo2/',
            'mask': ['armhf/*/*']
        }
    ]
    config['sorting'] = ['sources order', 'num subarches(less)']
    config['storage'] = "/home/strikov/maas-playground/out/"
(2.1)
config['sources'] describes a list of sources which should be used to
pull the boot resources;
mask describes which boot resources we want to pull from a specific repository
('armhf/midway/*' mask means that we want to pull boot resources for
'midway' armhf machines for all distros available in the repo)
```

(2.2)config['sorting'] describes how to choose the winner if multiple boot resources are available for a specific machine; configuration provided above instructs maas to give the boot resource a higher priority if it came from a repo mentioned earlier in a repo list; if both resources came from the same repo then more specific (one which has less supported subarches) boot resource wins (2.3)config['storage'] tells maas where to store all the pulled boot resources (in production config it should be /var/lib/maas/<...>) _____ SCRIPT INTERNALS _____ (3.1)Script needs to merge metadata from different sources and filter this metadata according to the list of required arch/subarch/distro. To simplify these operations script uses the following internal representation of the metadata. All the boot resources are represented by a hierarchy of dictionaries which can be accessed the following way: boot['armhf']['midway']['trusty'] -> [{'product_name':<...>, <other</pre> metadata field>}, {'product name':<...>, <other metadata field>}] (3.2)To generate this internal representation script uses RepoDumper class derived from BasicMirrorWriter. This object doesn't create any files in the filesystem and just returns back the hierarchy of dictionaries described above. Before merging hierarchies created from different metadata-sources script filters these hierarchies according to repo-specific mask (e.g. 'armhf/midway/*'). Then all filtered hierarchies are merged into one. (3.3)As you can see in (3.1) boot[arch][subarch][distro] returns back a list of boot resources available for this specific arch/subarch/distro triplet. We may sort this list to choose which boot resource to use. Sorting procedure takes into account its configuration options passed in config['sorting']. After carring out this sorting procedure boot resources hierarchy contains just a single entry (winner) for each arch/subarch/distro triplet. We basically know which product we need to pull for every arch/subarch/distro triplet requested. (3.4)Using RepoWriter class derived from ObjectStoreMirrorWriter we pull the products which were determined at (3.3). (3.5)To simplify interoperability with Provisioning Server script creates a specific set of folders/files in the filesystem: <...>/control/\$arch/\$subarch/\$distro/{boot-kernel, boot-initrd, di-kernel, di-initrd, disk} where every leaf is a symlink to a specific binary object pulled from the repo. By following this approach all the complexity is stored inside the script not Provisioning Server. Provision Server just pulls the requested object from a well-defined hierarchy every time PXE request comes.

(3.6)To create this hierarchy of symlinks we need to get additional information at step (3.3) That's not enough to know which products we want to pull. We need to know for which subarch we want to use this product (product can deploy many subarches but it won only for a single subarch). To get this knowledge we 'reverse' our boot resource hierarchy to get reverse[product name] -> [subarch1, subarch2, subarch3] relation. Then we pass this data structure to RepoWriter. With this information available RepoWriter creates all the required symlinks in the <...>/control/\$arch/\$subarch/\$distro/<...> hierarchy _____ OPEN OUESTIONS _____ (4.1)Do we want to have a separate configuration file for the tool responsible for pulling boot resources? Which file format to use for it? Right now we have a separate configuration file (/etc/maas/import pxe files) which utilizes trivial <var>=<content> data format (4.2)Do we want to use 'keep items' feature of the simplestreams library to keep local copy of boot resources even if they are not provided by the repo. If yes -- do I still need to implement remove item()-like callbacks? (4.3)How do we want to represent 'kernel command line' configuration option of the product. The simplest way is to have a specific text file containing kernel command line required. With this way we can handle it the same way as other items. Oleg

Scott Moser <scott.moser@canonical.com> 5 February 2014 09:03 To: Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com> Cc: Gavin Panella <gavin.panella@canonical.com>, Robie Basak <robie.basak@canonical.com>

On Tue, 4 Feb 2014, Oleg Strikov wrote:

> Hi guys, > > After a few days of work I came up with the initial (mostly PoC) > version of the tool responsible for pulling boot resources described > by a new metadata format. > In this mail I'd like to discuss some of the design decision that were > made and get as much of criticism as possible because it's much > simpler to fix most of the issues on this stage. > > You can find all the source code here: https://pastebin.canonical.com/104209/ > If you know any other way to share the code and make it commentable --

I thikn its perfectly fine for you to use laujnchpad public branches (even $^{\prime }/\text{+junk})$ to just show things.

Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com> 13 February 2014 13:54 To: Scott Moser <scott.moser@canonical.com> Cc: Gavin Panella <gavin.panella@canonical.com>, Robie Basak <robie.basak@canonical.com>

```
Hi guys,
```

> Hi guys,

Did anyone have a chance to look through the code?

Thanks Oleg [Quoted text hidden]

Scott Moser <scott.moser@canonical.com> 13 February 2014 19:20 To: Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com> Cc: Gavin Panella <gavin.panella@canonical.com>, Robie Basak <robie.basak@canonical.com> On Thu, 13 Feb 2014, Oleg Strikov wrote:

> > Did anyone have a chance to look through the code?

I looked, and doesn't look unreasonable. Have you done any other work on getting such a path functional in maas ?

Sorry to have left it for a week. I'll be in tomorrow, but then will be mostly out next week. Ping me on IRC and we'll try to set up a plan for moving this forward.

Scott [Quoted text hidden]

 Gavin Panella <gavin.panella@canonical.com>
 15 February 2014 20:39

 To: Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com>
 C: Scott Moser <scott.moser@canonical.com>, Robie Basak <robie.basak@canonical.com>

Hi Oleg,

I'm sorry it's taken such a long time to respond to this. You seem to have anticipated a lot of stuff, and I feel good about where you're going with this. I'm sure we'll find others things are we integrate this into MAAS, but I don't see anything that makes me worry about that process.

On 4 February 2014 14:52, Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com> wrote:
> Hi guys,
>
> After a few days of work I came up with the initial (mostly PoC)
> version of the tool responsible for pulling boot resources described
> by a new metadata format.
> In this mail I'd like to discuss some of the design decision that were
> made and get as much of criticism as possible because it's much
> simpler to fix most of the issues on this stage.
> You can find all the source code here: https://pastebin.canonical.com/104209/
> If you know any other way to share the code and make it commentable --> please let me know.

I have comments about the code itself, but they can wait; they're only small things. Scott knows I always have comments about code ;) > > FINAL VERSION OF THE METADATA FORMAT > > Here is how a typical metadata entry looks like: > > { <...> > > "products": { > "com.ubuntu.maas.repo2:boot:14.04:armhf:hwe": { > "release": "trusty", > "version": "14.04", > "arch": "armhf", > "versions": { "20140125": { > > "subarches": "slayton, highbank", Any reason not to use a list: "subarches": ["slayton", "highbank"], That would also simplify ordering by number of subarchitectures. [Quoted text hidden] Is there a reason not to use a "generic" subarch? This heuristic makes me uncomfortable. [Quoted text hidden] Files and file formats are secondary; the programmatic interface is what's important. Looks like that's okay from what you've written above. As we improve MAAS's HA story we'll be running cluster controllers on multiple machines for the same cluster, and I don't want to ask users to edit the same file in multiple places. Juju can help us with that, but I'd prefer to think of ways to avoid storing configuration state on cluster controllers anyway; I'd rather it asked the region for its config. > > (2.1)> config['sources'] describes a list of sources which should be used to > pull the boot resources; > mask describes which boot resources we want to pull from a specific repository > ('armhf/midway/*' mask means that we want to pull boot resources for > 'midway' armhf machines for all distros available in the repo) Multiple sources is great :) [Quoted text hidden] Just consider the programmatic API for now. > > (4.2) > Do we want to use 'keep_items' feature of the simplestreams library to > keep local copy of boot resources even if they are not provided by the > repo. > If yes -- do I still need to implement remove item()-like callbacks?

I discussed this briefly with Scott in Cape Town. Is there some way we can do delayed garbage collection? As in, keep the most-recently ejected set of resources around, only deleting them when they're the second-most-recently ejected, or after a day or two perhaps.

> (4.3)> How do we want to represent 'kernel command line' configuration option > of the product. > The simplest way is to have a specific text file containing kernel > command line required. > With this way we can handle it the same way as other items. I think I need to talk to you to understand this better. There are currently two ways already in MAAS to customise the kernel command-line, and they already have confusing behaviour. Before we add another we need to think really hard! > Oleq Thank you for doing all this! Do you mind if I share this with others in my team, or would you prefer more time for discussion in a smaller group? Gavin. Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com> 19 February 2014 14:04 To: Gavin Panella <gavin.panella@canonical.com> Cc: Scott Moser <scott.moser@canonical.com>, Robie Basak <robie.basak@canonical.com>, Andrew Cloke <andrew.cloke@canonical.com> Hi Gavin, Many thanks for your comments. Please find my responses below. >>> Is there some way we can do delayed garbage collection? >>> As in, keep the most-recently ejected set of resources around,

>>> only deleting them when they're the >>> second-most-recently ejected, or after a day or two perhaps.

>

I did some investigation and it seems to me that this issue can be addressed the following way:

(1) script which pulls boot resources needs to have hash-addressable cache (metadata contains hash value for each item and we can check cache before pulling the item)

(2) every time you run maas-import-boot-resources it creates a new snapshot-<date>-<time> folder and populates it according to the metadata on the server (2.1) snapshot folder is position (root path) independent because it has the following structure

snapshot-19022014-161038/boot/http%%server1.com/<files>

/boot/http%%server2.com/<files>

/control/armhf/highbank/trusty/kernel ->

../../../boot/http%%server1.com/trusty/highbank/kernel-abc (note relative path here)

(3) due to the cache (1) procedure in (2) pulls just new/updated images and copies others (we may use hardlinks as well if we wish)

(4) script updates 'current' symlink to point to this new snapshot-19022014-161038 folder instead of the previous one

(5) if admin wants to use good old set of boot resources he simply updates 'current' symlink to point to a different snapshot-date-time folder
(5.1) that's possible because we use relative paths in (2.1)
(5.2) note that by changing just one symlink you restore the whole configuration (images + control structure)

(6) on step (2) we may create maas.meta file inside the snapshot folder; this file may contain a dump of metadata which was used to populate the folder;

```
on step (2) we compare new metadata from the server with the local metadata in
 current/maas.metadata;
     we create new snapshot folder only if new metadata is different from the current one
 (7) that's for admin to decide which old snapshot folders to remove and when (we may
 delete some of them automatically if we wish by looking at their <date>-<time> name)
 What do you think?
 >>> Any reason not to use a list: "subarches": ["slayton", "highbank"]
 >>> That would also simplify ordering by number of subarchitectures.
 Current version of simplestreams can't handle array-based fields.
 We can extend simplestreams library if we wish (this needs to be discussed with Scott).
 I agree that this array-based description looks much better.
 >>>>>> metadata entry which describes generic (release) set of boot resources will have
 the longest 'subarches' list
 >>> Is there a reason not to use a "generic" subarch? This heuristic makes me
 uncomfortable.
 You're definitely right.
  'Generic' subarch is what we want here.
 >>> Do you mind if I share this with others in my team, or would you prefer
 >>> more time for discussion in a smaller group?
 Sure.
 Thanks!
 Olea
 [Quoted text hidden]
Scott Moser <scott.moser@canonical.com>
                                                                            19 February 2014 15:35
To: Gavin Panella <gavin.panella@canonical.com>
Cc: Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com>, Robie Basak <robie.basak@canonical.com>
 On Sat, 15 Feb 2014, Gavin Panella wrote:
 > Hi Oleg,
 >
 > >
         "versions": {
         "20140125": {
 > >
 > >
          "subarches": "slayton, highbank",
 >
 > Any reason not to use a list:
 >
 >
          "subarches": ["slayton", "highbank"],
 I'd really rather prefer not a list. nothign that uses simplestreams
 library at themoment expects a list. It could be fixed, but I honestly
 think that string comma delimited list is fine here.
 "tags" are key=string in simplestreams, not key=list.
 Its not a big deal, but its less invasive elsewhere to do it comma
 delimited. One example of pain from 'list' is that there is a shell
 usable 'mirror' that sets key=value as environment variables and executes
 hooks. if we allow lists in there (and then, why not dicts?) then we have
 to represent list somehow in environment variables.
```

```
len(','.split(subarches)) is only slightly more difficult than
len(subarches).
```

Scott

Robie Basak <robie.basak@canonical.com> To: Scott Moser <scott.moser@canonical.com>

Cc: Gavin Panella <gavin.panella@canonical.com>, Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com>

On Wed, Feb 19, 2014 at 10:35:49AM -0500, Scott Moser wrote: > I'd really rather prefer not a list. nothign that uses simplestreams > library at themoment expects a list. It could be fixed, but I honestly > think that string comma delimited list is fine here. > "tags" are key=string in simplestreams, not key=list. > > Its not a big deal, but its less invasive elsewhere to do it comma > delimited. One example of pain from 'list' is that there is a shell > usable 'mirror' that sets key=value as environment variables and executes > hooks. if we allow lists in there (and then, why not dicts?) then we have > to represent list somehow in environment variables. > > len(','.split(subarches)) is only slightly more difficult than > len(subarches).

I understand the cons; I just note that doing it this way now will lock us in forever to having an exception here, which is horrible. We might later need lists elsewhere, where overloading a string isn't sensible. Then we'll end up using both, with hardcoded exceptions.

Will anything need this particular thing in an environment variable right now? What if we used repr(subarches) for now instead, or even just convert a list into a comma-separated thing at this stage? Then we're pulling the issue up the stack, so making it easier to fix or change later.

Of course, I don't know what else will break in the existing code, and how much of an issue that is to fix. If you think that on balance it's not worth it, then I don't have a strong objection. And of course I'm not the one doing the work or dealing with the consequences.

signature.asc 1K

Gavin Panella <gavin.panella@canonical.com> 19 February 2014 15:49 To: Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com> Cc: Scott Moser <scott.moser@canonical.com>, Robie Basak <robie.basak@canonical.com>, Andrew Cloke <andrew.cloke@canonical.com>

[Quoted text hidden] It sounds good, but there's a lot of mechanism there that needs to be developed, and to go wrong for a while until we nail down all the edge cases.

I also not 100% sure that it'll address the reasons for keeping old boot resources around for a while (which I didn't talk about, sorry):

1. Backup-like records, so admins can revert if something is catastropically wrong. You've described a mechanism for this, but I think we can actually defer a MAAS-packaged solution for this and simply say it's up to end-users to manage backups for now.

The hash-addressable cache is interesting nevertheless, in that we can save both download bandwidth and disk space. It's an optimisation though, so we can also defer that until next cycle.

2. When updating boot resources there's a small window for problems, where a booting machine will get, for example, yesterday's kernel with today's initrd.

This implies that a machine that's booting needs to see a consistent TFTP subtree. We can do this by having, say, a serial number early in the TFTP path. We'd need to maintain a tree on the filesystem that corresponds to the serial numbers used over the last few hours (giving machines plenty of time to boot).

MAAS would need to understand this layout, which it doesn't right now; it assumes a single tree, and the code actually has critical sections where the tree is not valid when updating images (they're *small*, but there nevertheless).

There also needs to be a consistent ephemeral and install image tree, for similar reasons, though we might want the lifetime of an old tree to be 24 hours or more.

Implementation-wise, I'm thinking something like:

- * Sync up a single filesystem tree, containing ephemeral and install images, kernels, initrds, and so on.
- * Use `rsync --link-dest ...` to efficiently create a time-stamped snapshot.
- * MAAS can then switch to using this tree for subsequent boots.
- * MAAS can retire trees more than, say, 48 hours old, and delete them.

It's not as sexy as a hash-addressable store, but it's probably a lot less work, fewer bugs to squash, and so forth. [Quoted text hidden]

Robie Basak <robie.basak@canonical.com>

19 February 2014 15:58

To: Gavin Panella <gavin.panella@canonical.com> Cc: Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com>, Scott Moser <scott.moser@canonical.com>, Andrew Cloke <andrew.cloke@canonical.com>

On Wed, Feb 19, 2014 at 03:49:45PM +0000, Gavin Panella wrote: > It's not as sexy as a hash-addressable store, but it's probably a lot > less work, fewer bugs to squash, and so forth.

If we're going to go down the route of trying to invent something that solves this problem, then I'd like to point to git-annex. It deals with binary blob trees nicely, does content addressing, expiring old ones, etc.

There is a little precedent here, in that juju-core uses git to maintain units' charm directories. But not git-annex, which is essentially a third-party (though popular) binary blob handling extension.

```
Catch: it's not currently in main, and depends on a Haskell stack, which
is gargantuan. So perhaps we can't use it. But it seems a shame to have
to essentially reimplement it.
```

signature.asc 1K

Scott Moser <scott.moser@canonical.com> 19 Febra To: Robie Basak <robie.basak@canonical.com> Cc: Gavin Panella <gavin.panella@canonical.com>, Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com>

19 February 2014 16:08

```
> On Wed, Feb 19, 2014 at 10:35:49AM -0500, Scott Moser wrote:
> > I'd really rather prefer not a list. nothign that uses simplestreams
> > library at themoment expects a list. It could be fixed, but I honestly
> > think that string comma delimited list is fine here.
> >
> > "tags" are key=string in simplestreams, not key=list.
> >
> > Its not a big deal, but its less invasive elsewhere to do it comma
> > delimited. One example of pain from 'list' is that there is a shell
> > usable 'mirror' that sets key=value as environment variables and executes
> > hooks. if we allow lists in there (and then, why not dicts?) then we have
> > to represent list somehow in environment variables.
> >
>> len(','.split(subarches)) is only slightly more difficult than
> > len(subarches).
>
> I understand the cons; I just note that doing it this way now will lock
> us in forever to having an exception here, which is horrible. We might
it doesn't lock you in forever by any means.
current implementation will just ignore non-strings values as tags.
future implementation would do something else.
future streams data that had both subarches and subarches list would just
do:
 subarches: "foo,bar,zee"
 subarches list: [foo,bar,zee]
Alternatively, new maas knows about new urls or 'format' values.
Currently, we specify in the data:
  "format": "products:1.0"
format of products with tags as dict or list would just be:
  "format": "products:1.0"
> later need lists elsewhere, where overloading a string isn't sensible.
> Then we'll end up using both, with hardcoded exceptions.
>
> Will anything need this particular thing in an environment variable
> right now? What if we used repr(subarches) for now instead, or even just
> convert a list into a comma-separated thing at this stage? Then we're
> pulling the issue up the stack, so making it easier to fix or change
> later.
The thing that has to change is the code that decides if something is a
"tag" (and thus should apply all end-nodes). Currently, that logic is:
  a tag is something that is a string or unicode
if you make tags have lists or dicts, then presumably they can have lists
of dicts and dicts of lists and such. it just gets harder to represent.
I don't think its impossible, but I do think it means clients have to be
more complex, and that it is an unnecessary change.
[Quoted text hidden]
```

Oleg Strikov <oleg.strikov@canonical.com> 19 February 2014 17:51 To: Gavin Panella <gavin.panella@canonical.com> Cc: Scott Moser <scott.moser@canonical.com>, Robie Basak <robie.basak@canonical.com>, Andrew Cloke <andrew.cloke@canonical.com>

Hi Gavin,

Thanks a lot for your comments.

>>> It sounds good, but there's a lot of mechanism there that needs to be developed

>>> The hash-addressable cache is interesting nevertheless, in that we can save both download bandwidth and disk space. >>> It's an optimisation though, so we can also defer that until next cycle.

Actually I already implemented cache-based mechanics. That's just a proof-of-concept implementation but I think we can come up with productionlike code w/o any serious issues. Do you agree to take this functionality into the first release taking into account that we already have it ~implemented?

>>> When updating boot resources there's a small window for problems, >>> where a booting machine will get, for example, yesterday's kernel >>> with today's initrd.

We can read 'current' link first and determine the actual folder name. Then we may use this folder name and path during deployment phase to avoid any collisions with the update mechanics. Update script may change 'current' link content but deployment code continues use correct (previous) set of boot resources.

Oleg [Quoted text hidden]