

Setting Up Cockpit for Multi-Server Management (Linux Mint)

This knowledge base article summarizes the steps taken to get Cockpit running, including specific fixes for errors encountered.

Objective

To install Cockpit on a primary Linux Mint server and connect other Linux Mint servers to manage them from a single web interface.

Prerequisites

- **Primary Server:** Linux Mint XFCE (e.g., LinuxServer)
 - **Secondary Servers:** Linux Mint XFCE (e.g., MediaServer, LinuxServer3)
 - **Unsupported:** Home Assistant OS (HAOS) cannot host Cockpit directly.
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Step 1: Install Cockpit on the Primary Server

Run these commands on the computer you want to use as your main controller:

1. Install the software:

```
sudo apt update && sudo apt install cockpit -y
```

2. Enable the service:

```
sudo systemctl enable --now cockpit.socket
```

3. Open the firewall:

```
sudo ufw allow 9090
```

Step 2: Troubleshooting Installation Errors

Issue: `apt` failed due to a broken "synosnap" (Synology Active Backup) package.

Fix: Use a dummy script to trick the system into removing the broken package.

1. Create the dummy script structure:

```
sudo mkdir -p /opt/synosnap/hooks/  
sudo touch /opt/synosnap/hooks/dpkg-post-hook.sh  
sudo chmod +x /opt/synosnap/hooks/dpkg-post-hook.sh
```

2. Force the install to finish:

```
sudo apt -f install
```

3. Purge the broken package:

```
sudo dpkg --purge synosnap
```

Step 3: Prepare Secondary Servers

Issue: "Unable to contact... port 22" when adding a host.

Cause: Linux Mint does not have the SSH server enabled by default.

Run these commands on **every** secondary server you want to control:

1. Install and enable SSH:

```
sudo apt install openssh-server -y  
sudo systemctl enable --now ssh
```

2. Allow SSH through firewall:

```
sudo ufw allow ssh
```

3. Install Cockpit packages (for metrics):

```
sudo apt install cockpit cockpit-pcp -y
```

Step 4: Connect Servers in the GUI

1. **Access the Web Interface:** Open a browser and go to `https://<PRIMARY_IP>:9090`.
2. **Note:** Accept the "Not Secure" / SSL warning (Advanced -> Proceed).
3. **Log in:** Use your Linux username and password.
4. **Add Host:**
 - Click the dropdown menu in the top-left (or "Overview").
 - Click "Add new host".
 - Enter the IP of the secondary server.
 - Check "Log in automatically" to save credentials.

Step 5: Enabling Metrics & History

Issue: Missing graphs/history.

Fix: The `cockpit-dashboard` package is deprecated. Use PCP (Performance Co-Pilot) instead.

Run this on **all** servers to enable history recording:

```
sudo apt install cockpit-pcp -y
sudo systemctl enable --now pmlogger
sudo systemctl enable --now pmproxy
```

Known Limitations

- **Home Assistant:** Cannot be added to Cockpit (unless running as a VM inside Linux).
- **"Single Pane" Dashboard:** The old grid view of all servers at once has been deprecated.
- **Navigation:** Use the dropdown menu to switch between servers.

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