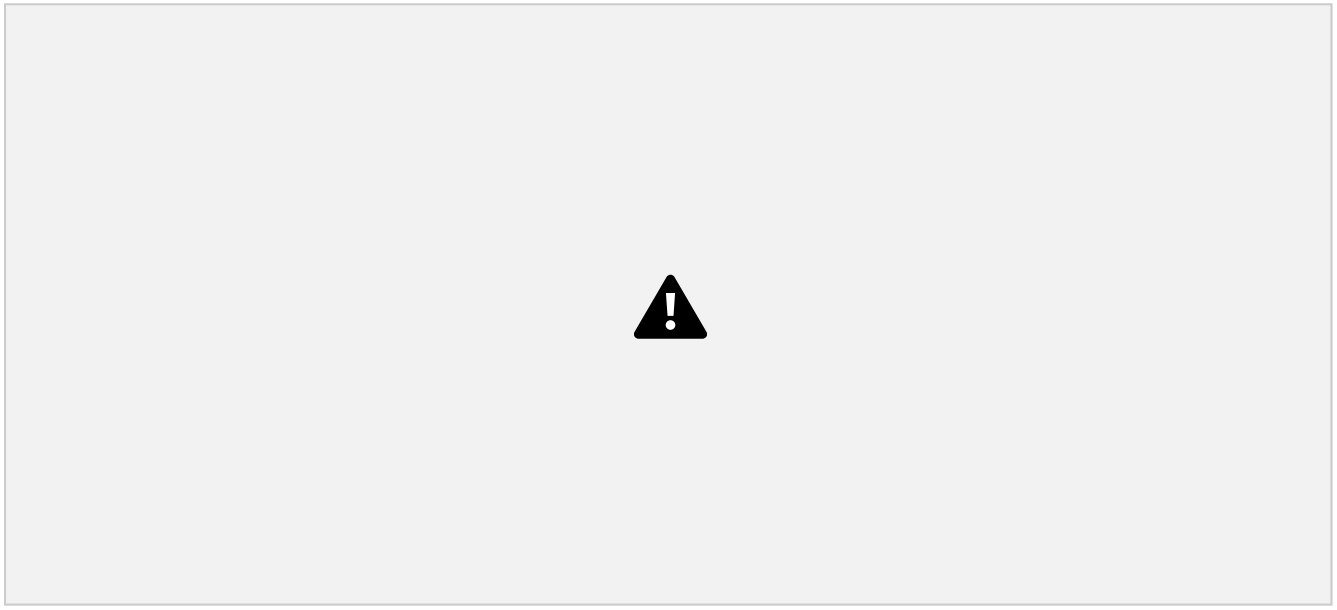
Expand VMware ESXi Datastore Capacity

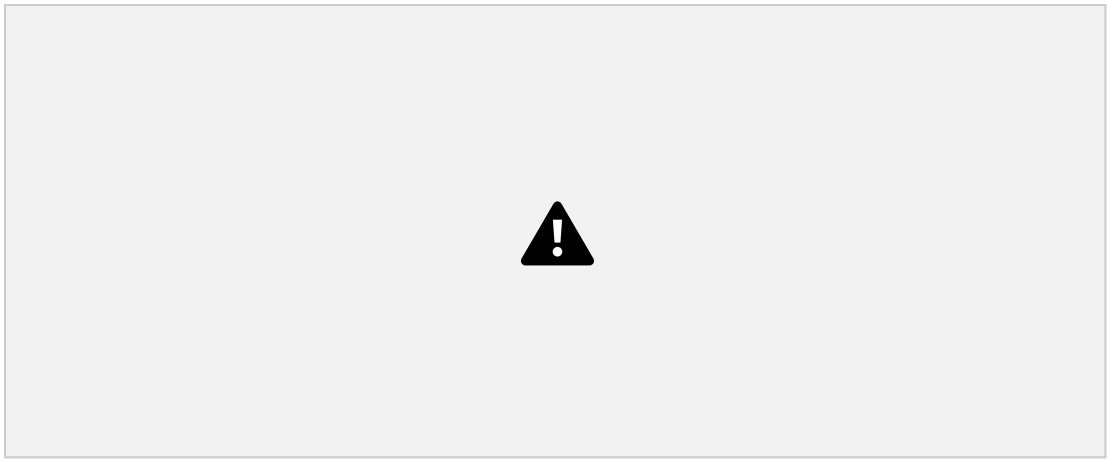
https://thebackroomtech.com/2017/10/06/expand-vmware-esxi-datastore-capacity/

Increase Datastore Capacity for ESXi

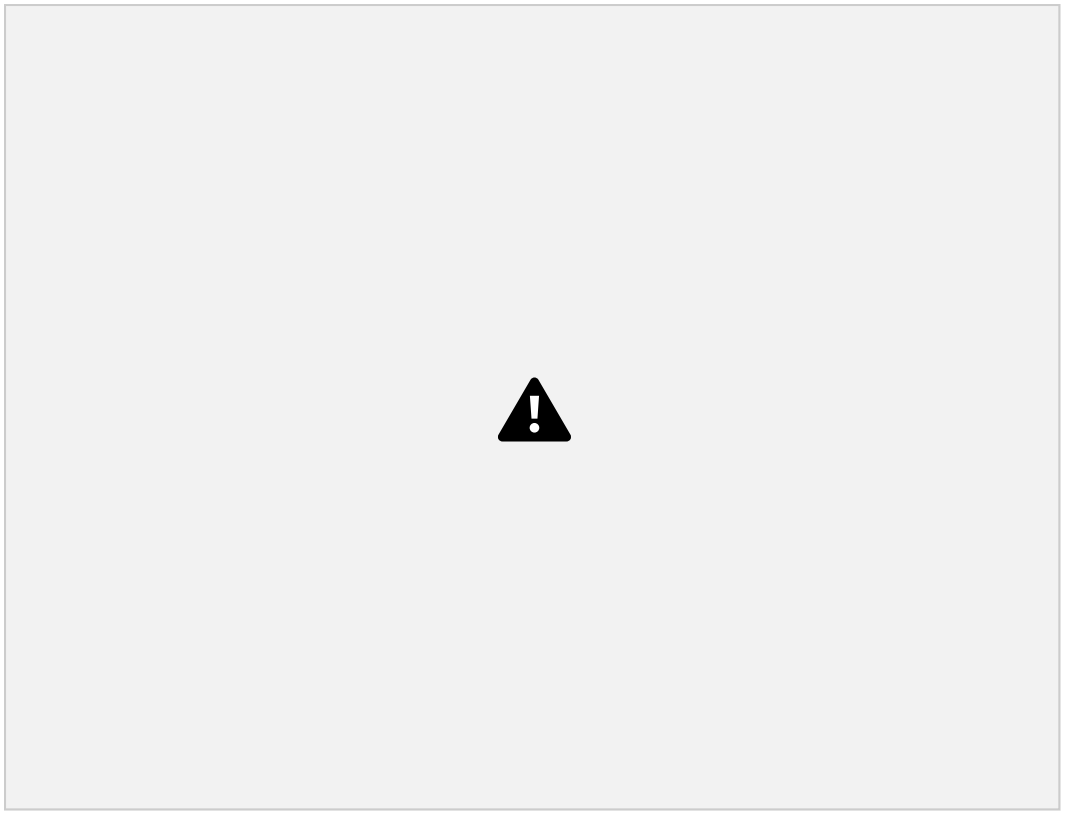
To get started, log into the ESXi web interface and click on **Storage** in the left-hand menu.



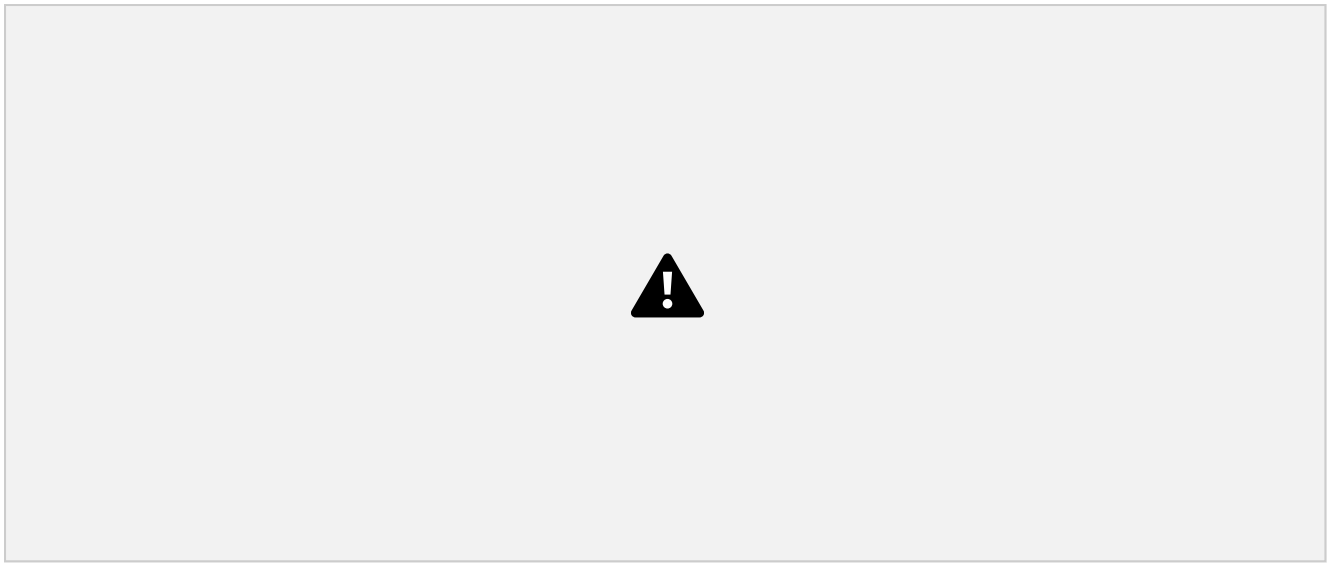
You should now see a list of the current datastores on the ESXi server along with information about the datastore, i.e. capacity, free space, drive type, etc. Click on the datastore you want to expand to select it.



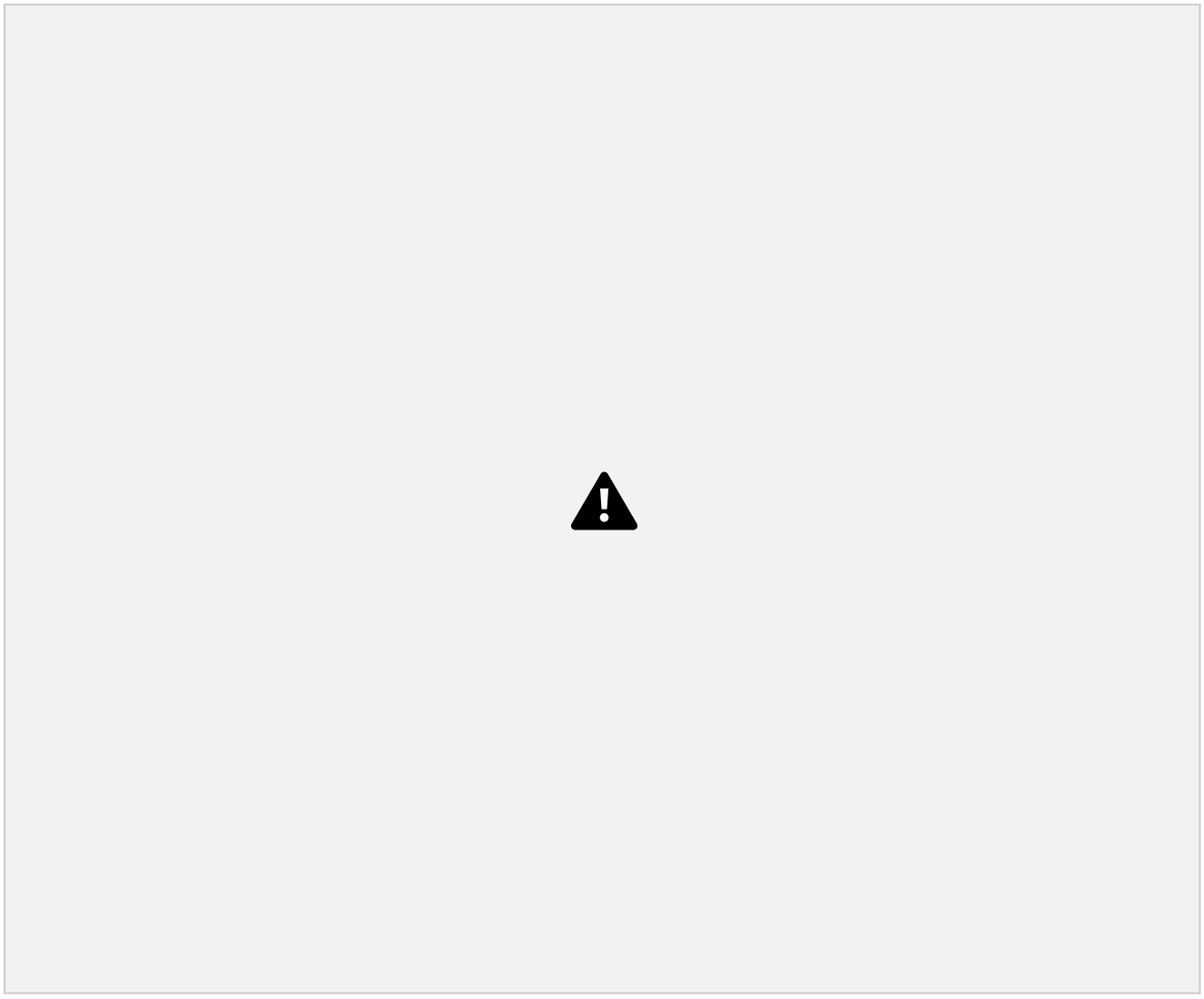
Once selected, the **Increase capacity** link will become available. Note that if you want to create a new datastore, you would click on the **New datastore** link instead.



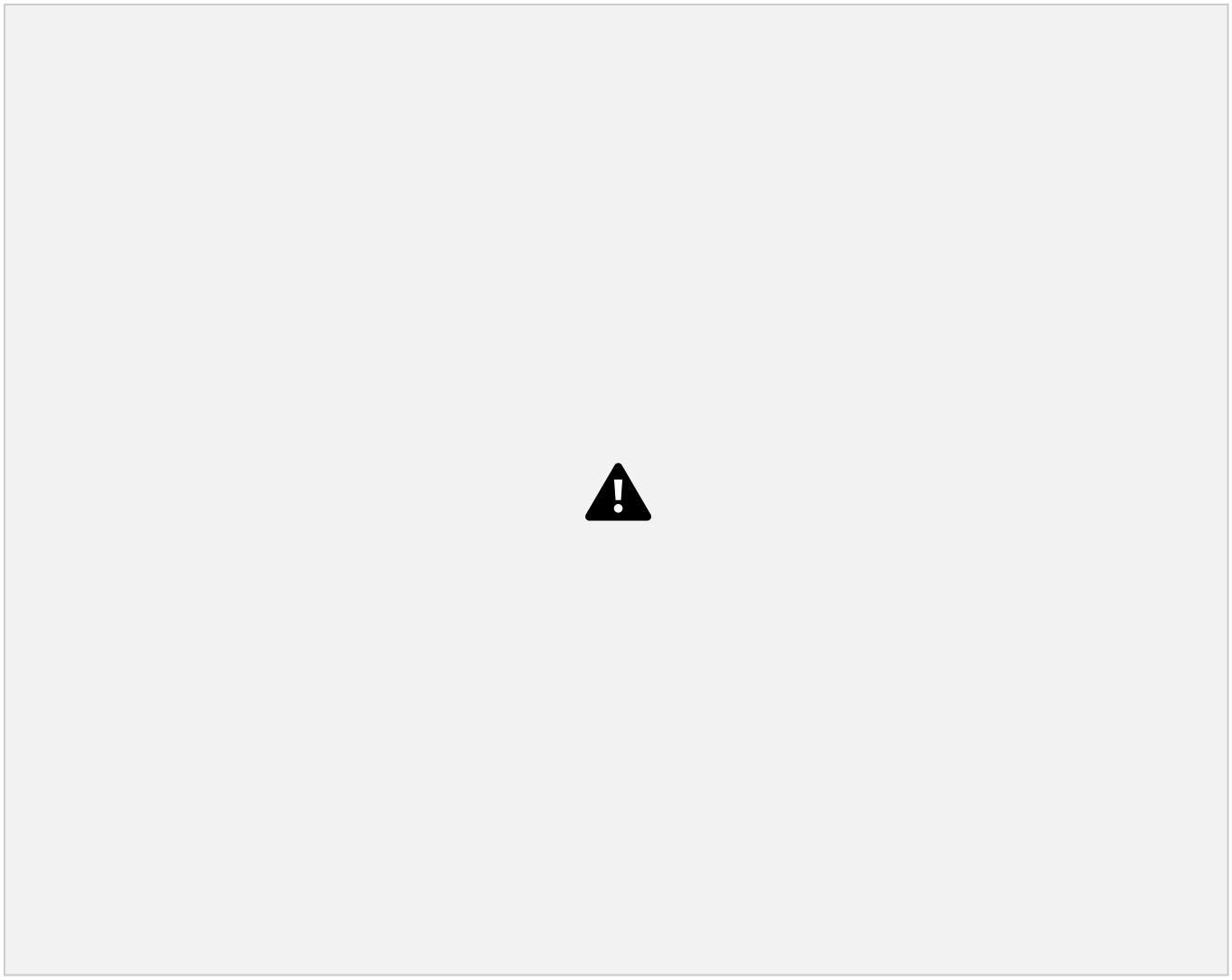
On this screen, it will list out any storage that is currently installed on the system, but not being used. You have to select the device on which you want to create the VMFS partition. In my case, the four 300GB NAS drives show up as a single disk with a capacity of around 836 GB. If you’re not seeing any device here to select, that means you need to first add the storage to your server or you have to properly provision it so that it shows up as a disk on the system.



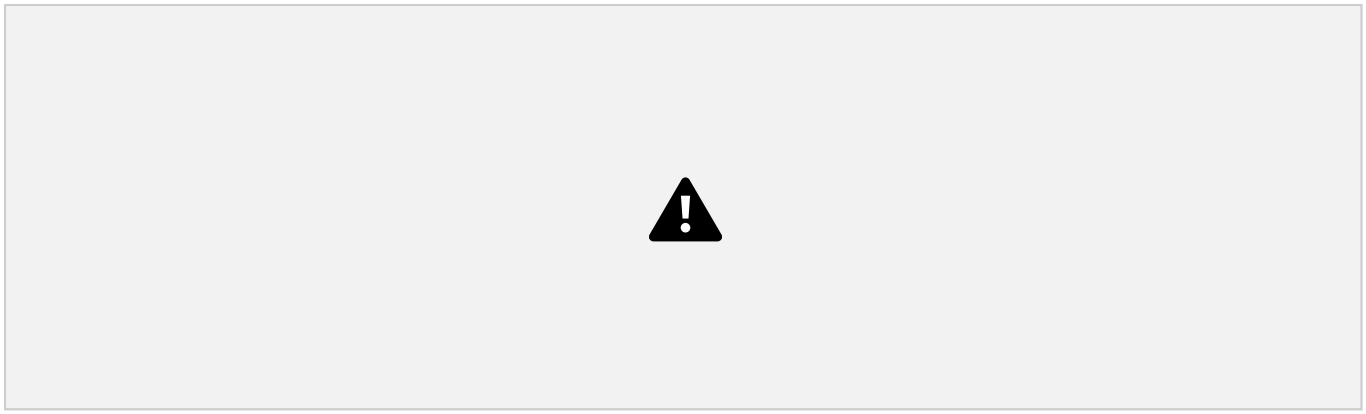
Next, you have to select the partitioning options. You can either use the full disk space or you can choose to create a smaller partition and leave some free space. You also have to choose the VMFS version, which in my case was either VMFS 5 or VMFS 6. Since the original datastore was on VMFS 5, I kept the value the same for the increased storage. If you want to understand the difference between VMFS 5 and 6, check out the article linked here.



The last screen is just a summary of all the options you selected previously. Click Finish and ESXi will go ahead and increase the capacity of your datastore.



As you can see, the ESXi server now has a capacity of 1.08 TB, up from 271 GB earlier.



That’s about it! Expanding your datastore in ESXi is a fairly simple process via the web GUI. If you have any questions, feel free to comment. Enjoy!

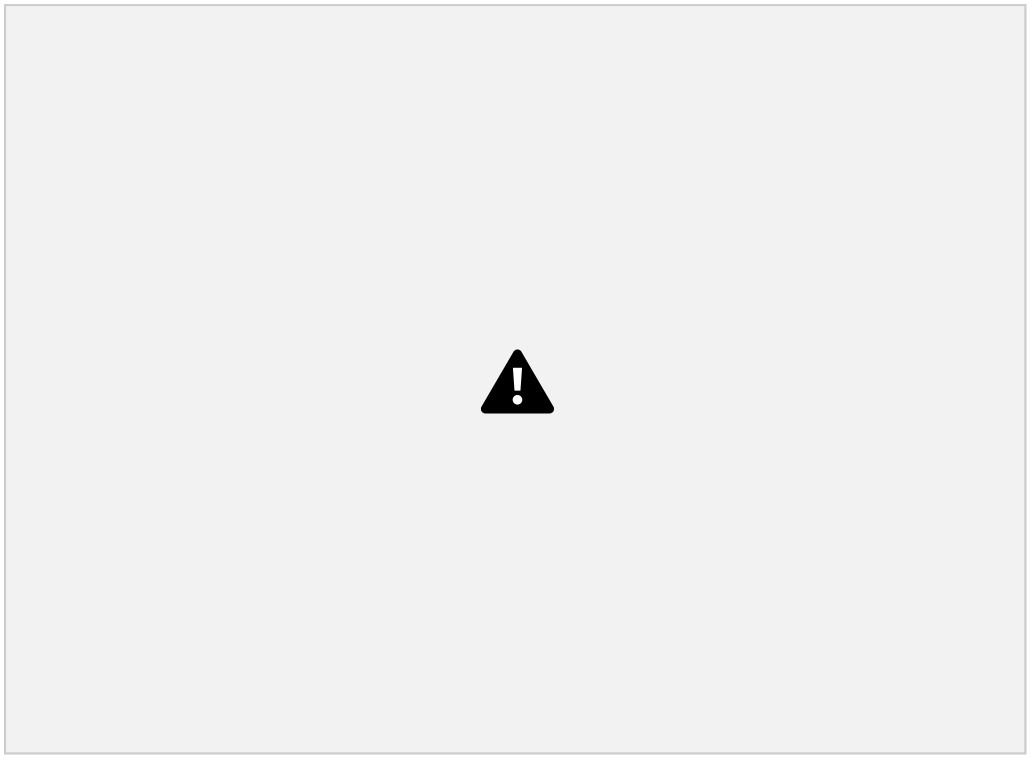
Setup VMware Workstation Server and Connect to Shared VMs

https://thebackroomtech.com/2017/09/13/setup-vmware-workstation-server-connect-shared-vms/

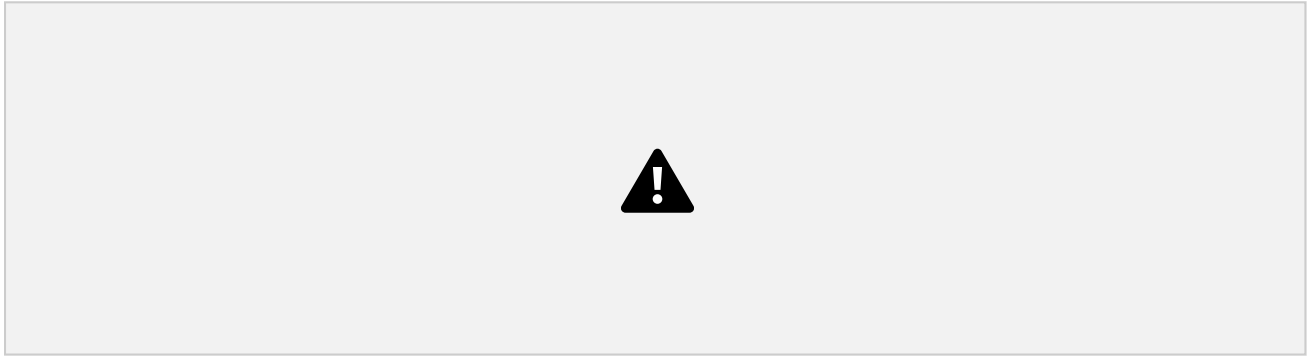
Step 1 – Enable Workstation Server

By default, you really shouldn’t have to do anything to share a virtual machine as it’s supposed to be enabled by default. However, in my case, it was disabled for some reason and I had to manually enable it.

To check this, open Workstation and then click on tab of the VM you want to share. Then click on **VM** at the top menu, then on **Manage** and then on **Share**. If you see the following message, that means the **Workstation Server** service is disabled.



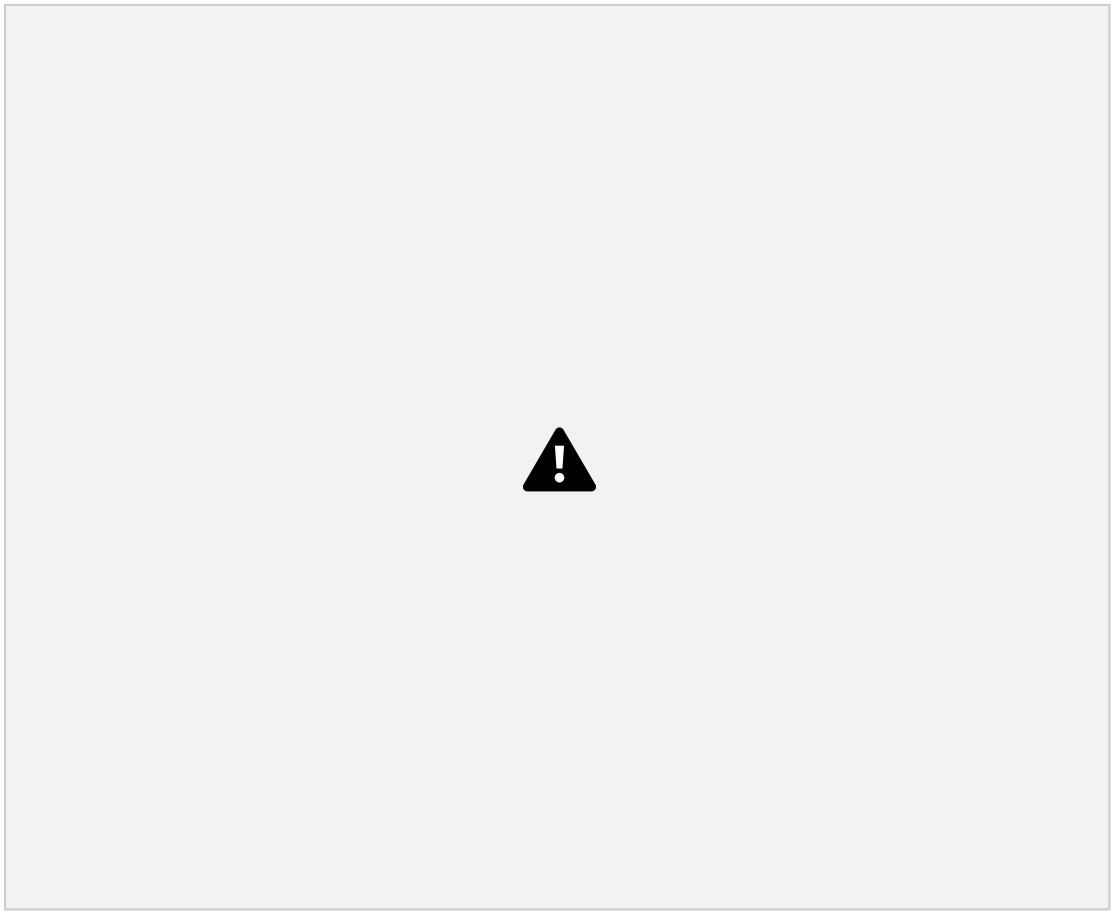
You can click on Start, type in **services** and then scroll down to the **VMware Workstation Server** service. In my case, it was set to **Manual** and it was not running.



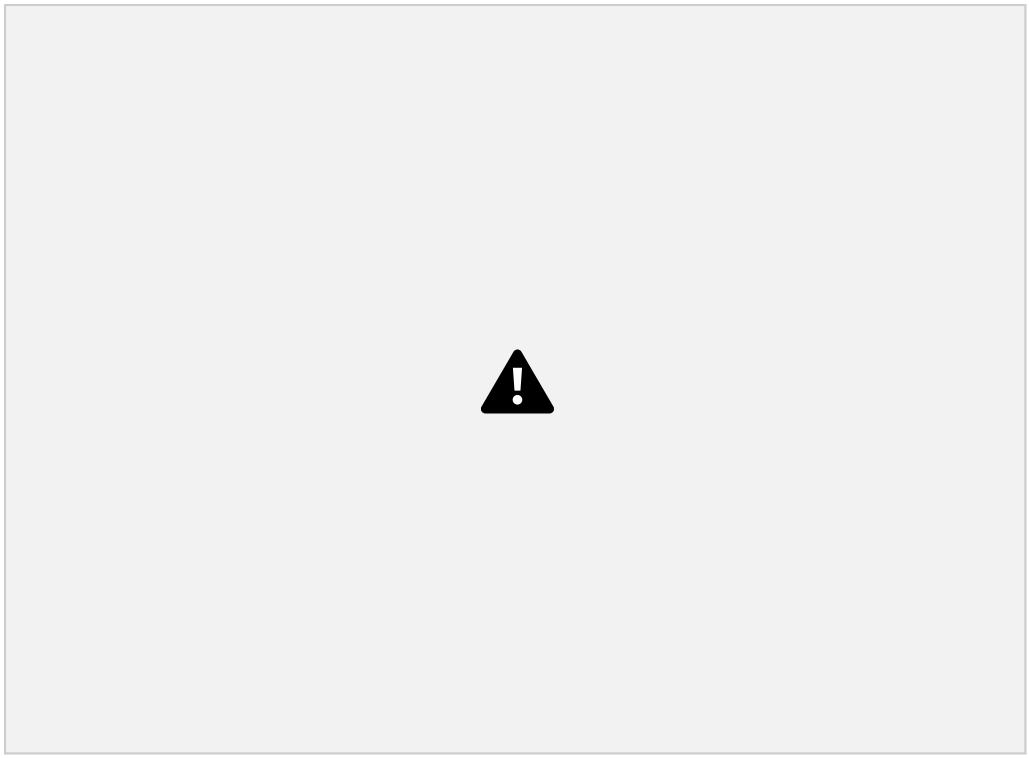
Simply double-click on the service and click on the **Start** button to start the service. Also, go ahead and change the startup type to **Automatic** to ensure that it starts after a reboot.

Step 2 – Share the VM

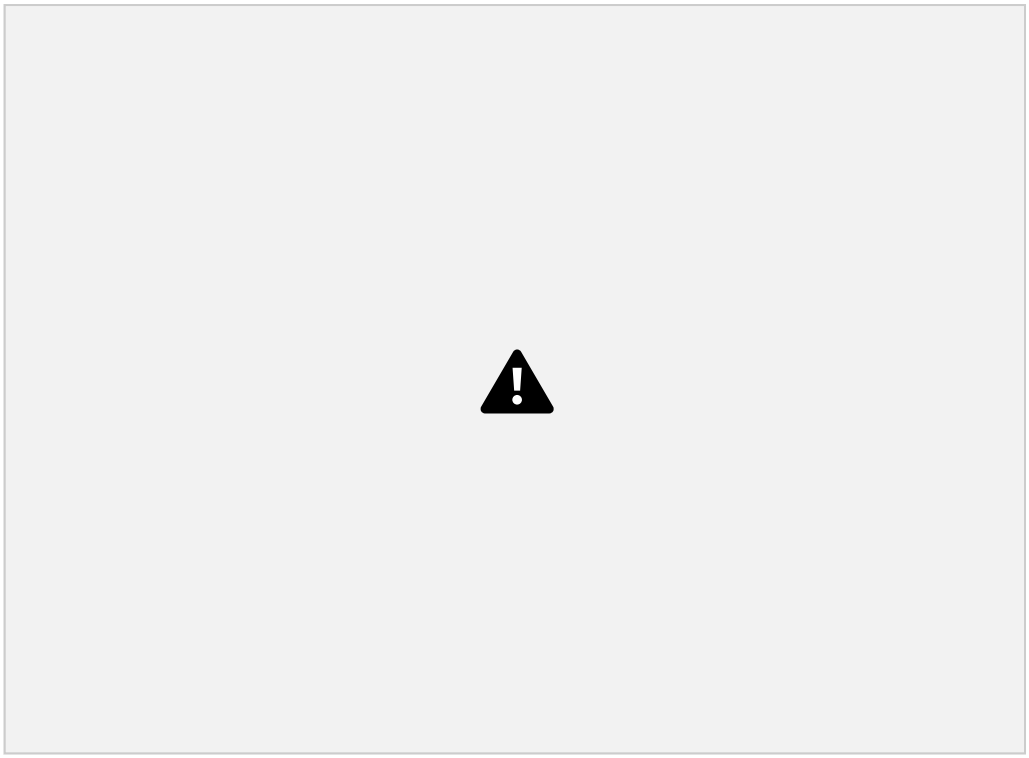
Now open VMware Workstation, click on the VM you want to share and then click on **VM** – **Manage** – **Share**.



The wizard should start up correctly this time. Click **Next** to continue.

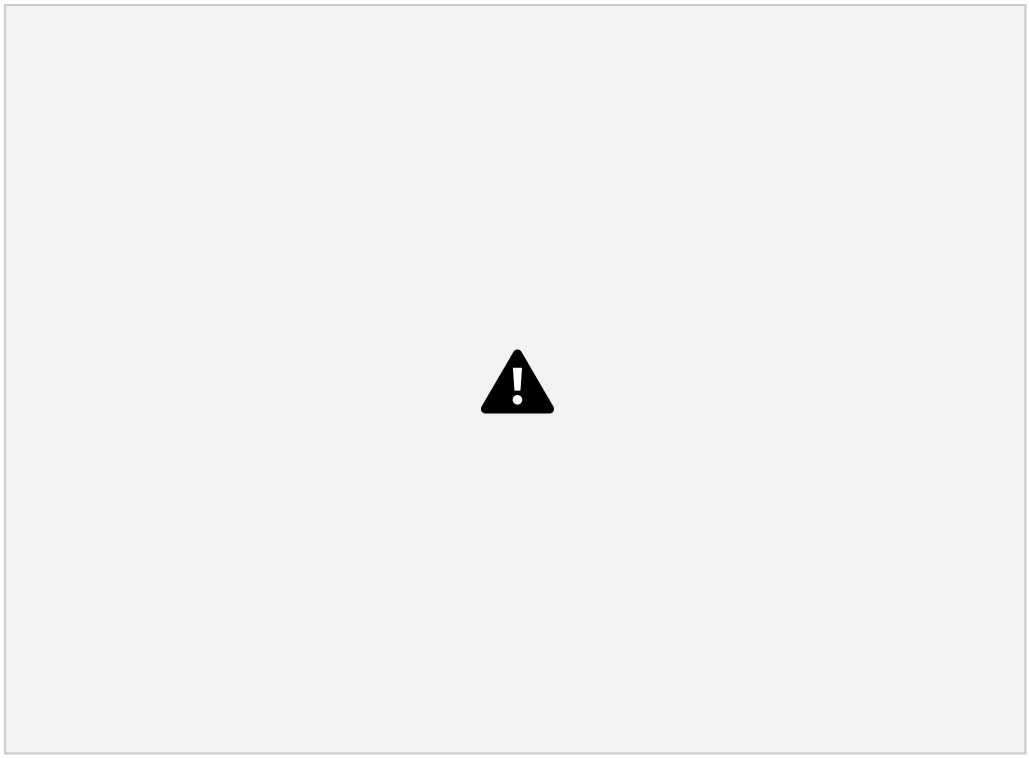


On this screen, you have to give your shared virtual machine a name and you have to choose whether you want to move it to the default shared directory or if you want to clone the whole virtual machine.



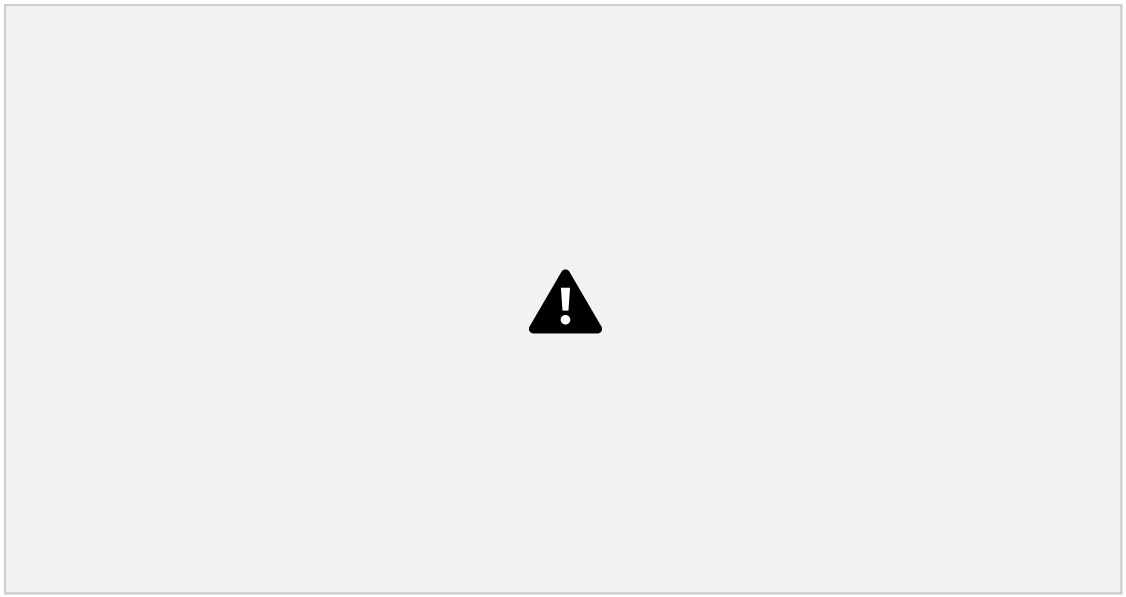
***Note**: When you share a virtual machine, you gain and lose some features. Even though you gain remote access, you lose the following features: unity, shared folders, auto-protect, drag and drop, copy/paste, thin print, 3D acceleration, and the ability to connect USB devices connected to the host to the virtual machine.*

Click **Finish** and the process should complete fairly quickly. You'll see a couple of checkmarks as confirmation.

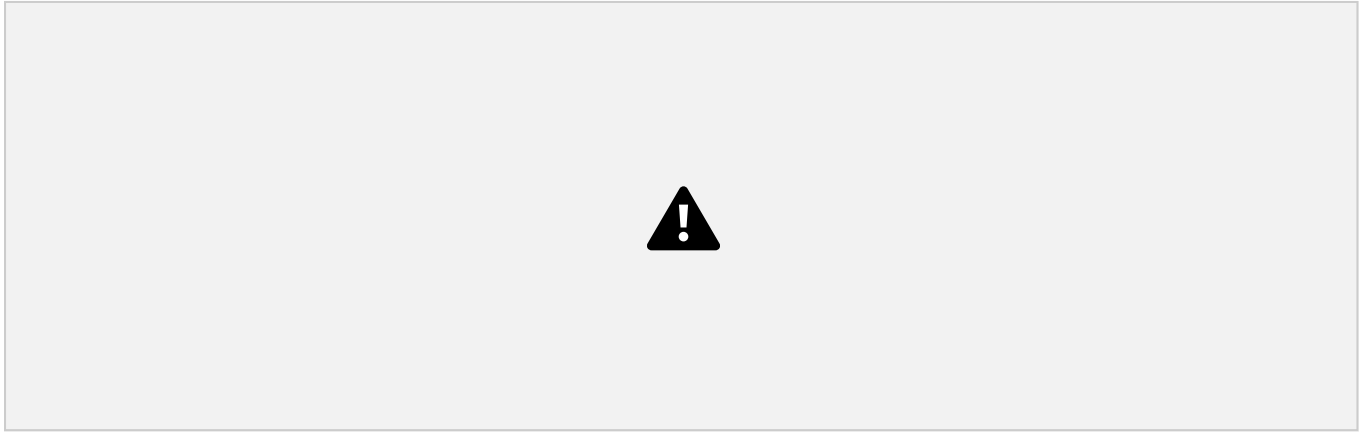


Step 3: Remotely Access VM

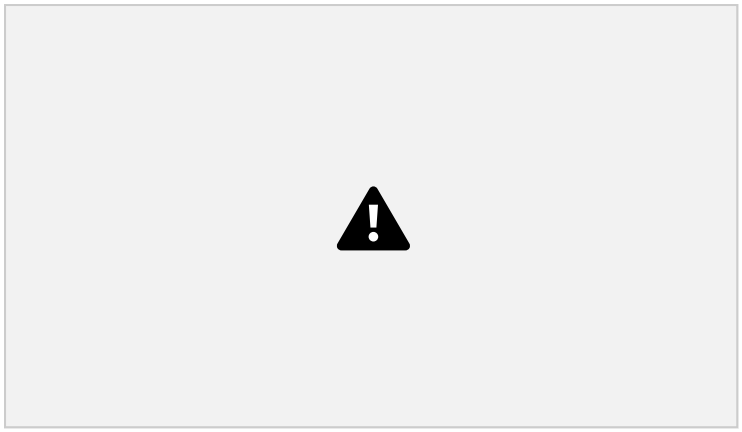
To access your shared VM remotely, you need to know the IP address of the computer acting as the server. You can do this easily by clicking on **Start**, typing in **CMD** and then typing **ipconfig** in the command window.



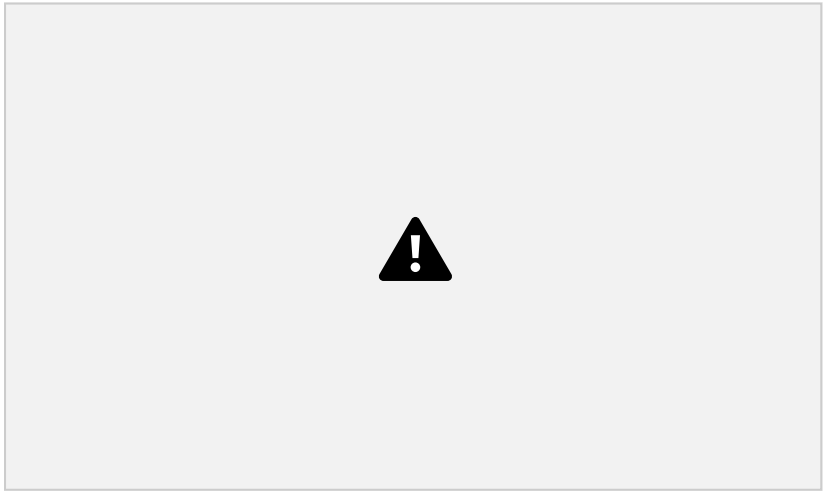
Now go to the other computer that has VMware Workstation installed and click on the **Home** tab.



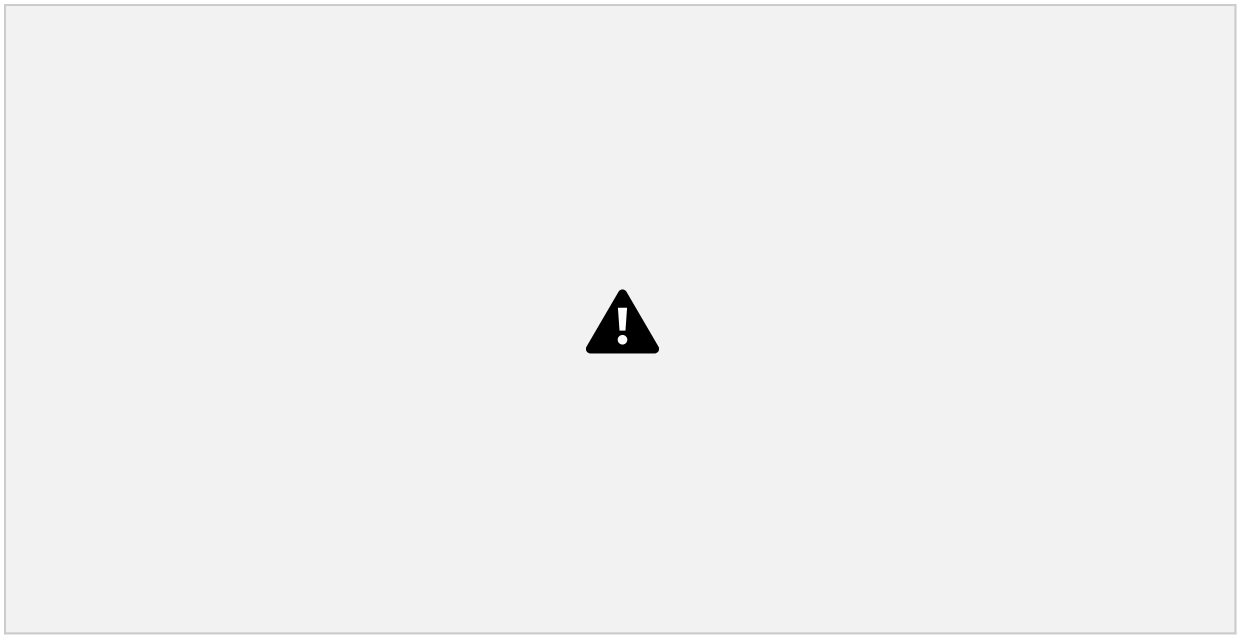
You'll see a button that says **Connect to a Remote Server**. Click on that option and you'll get a small dialog that asks you the server name, the user name and the password.



The server name can be either the IP address or the hostname of the computer. The username and password needs to be of a local administrator account on the server computer. If you are logged into that computer using your Microsoft account, you can use that login info to connect.

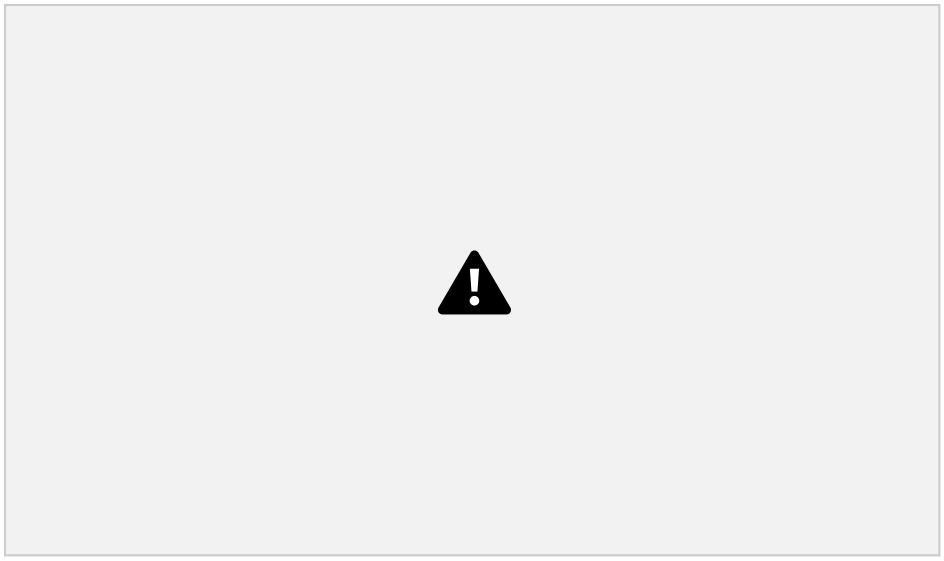


When connecting, you may see a dialog that warns you about the security certificate on the server. This is normally not a security issue (as long as you trust that computer) and you can click on **Connect Anyway**. If all works well, you should see the following screen in a new tab.

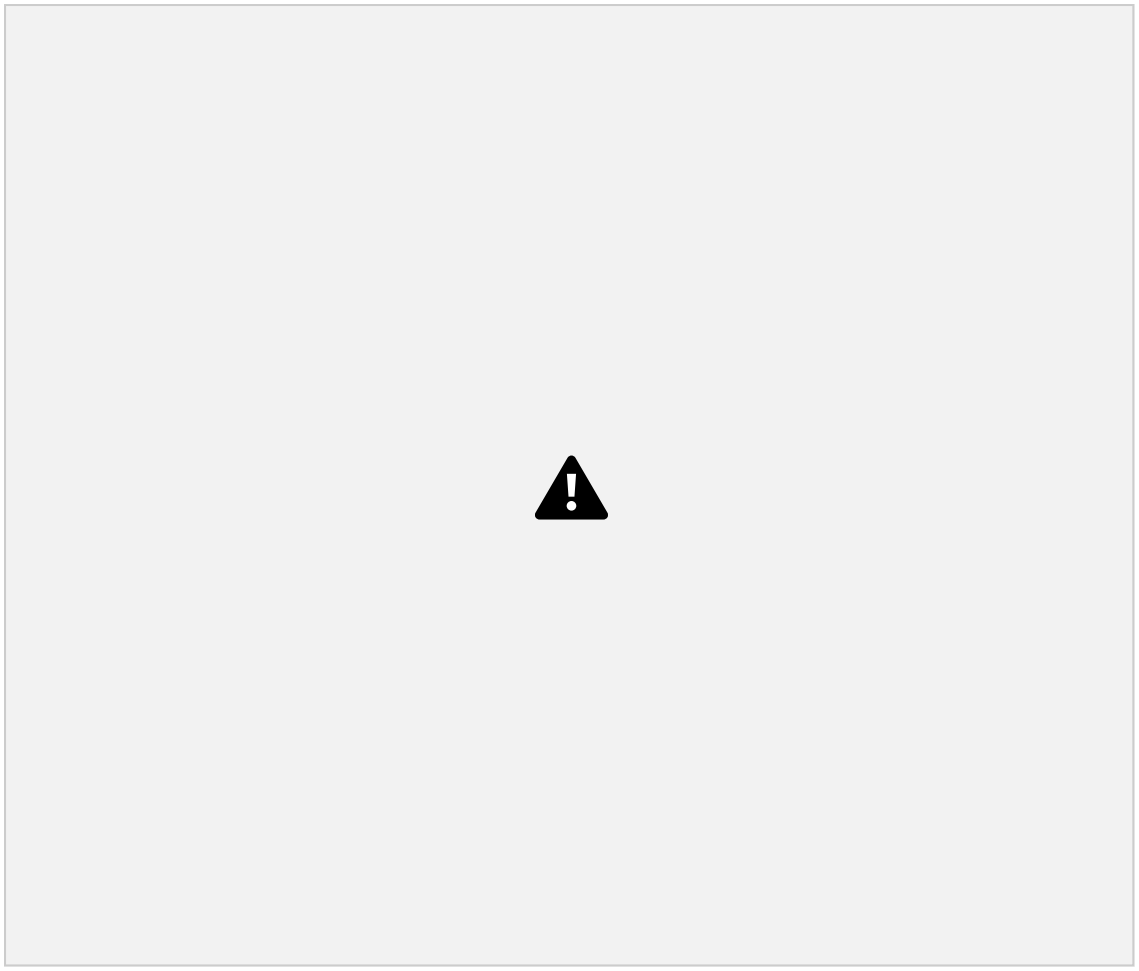


At the bottom, you should see all the virtual machines that you are currently sharing. In my case, I only shared one Windows 10 virtual machine. Click on it and then click the green play button to power it on. You can also right click on it to start it. Note that once it is powered on, you still have to right-click on it and choose **Open** to view the remote VM in a new tab.

Now you can use that VM as if it was running locally on your machine. Over a local area network, it works very well and I didn’t experience any lag or delays.



By default, the shared directory where shared VMs get saved is C:\Users\Public\Documents\Shared\Virtual Machines\ and the default port it uses to connect to the remote server is port 443. If you want to change either of these settings, you can do so by going to **Edit** – **Preferences** and clicking on **Shared VMs**.



Note that you should probably make these changes before you share any VMs because it can only be changed when there are no active shared VMs. If you want to change it, you have to first stop sharing each VM, which moves it out of the shared VM directory.

If you change the port number, when connecting from the client computer, you have to type in the hostname followed by a colon and the port number. For example, it would be 192.168.1.233:8000 for me if I was using port 8000 instead of 443. You can change the port number to increase security.