

Deployment Strategies in CI/CD Pipelines

Niko Benkler

Supervisor: Dr. Robert Heinrich
robert.heinrich@kit.edu

Abstract. In the last decade, software development experienced a huge transition. Since agile methodologies were introduced in the early 2000, software development became faster and faster. Today, another software development process is emerging: Continuous Software Engineering (CSE). CSE, especially Continuous Integration(CI), Continuous Delivery(CDE) and Continuous Deployment(CD) receive more and more attention in organizations such as Facebook, Paddy Power and Atlassian but also in small start-up companies. It enables them to e.g. deliver software more frequently, reduce time-to-market, obtain customer feedback faster, build the right product or to improve product quality. Therefore, this seminar paper presents the current state of the art concerning Continuous Practices, compares the traditional deployment strategies with the new CSE practices and proposes some tools, that can be used in a CI/CD Pipeline to support CSE.

Keywords - Agile, continuous software development, continuous integration, continuous delivery, continuous deployment, DevOps, CI/CD Pipeline

Table of Contents

Deployment Strategies in CI/CD Pipelines	1
<i>Niko Benkler</i>	
1 Introduction.....	3
2 Background	3
2.1 Agile Methodologies	3
2.2 DevOps	4

1 Introduction

Today, the software development process has to face many difficult demands. Fast-changing and unpredictable markets, changing customer requirements [CISA15] and rapidly advancing information technologies [OlAB12] require a faster process of software development. To achieve this, several organizations adopt Continuous Practices in order to extend their agile practices [CISA15]. Therefore, releasing software becomes even faster.

This seminar paper presents an evolution path, called 'stairway to heaven' [OlAB12], which describes a possible transition from traditional development towards CD. As the core of CDE is a deployment pipeline [SCLZ⁺16], the paper also presents its usual phases and the possible tools, that support each phase. Nevertheless, studying several papers revealed, that CDE not only comes with benefits, but also with huge social and technical challenges [CISA15]. The paper clarifies them and proposes some mitigation strategies. The remainder of the seminar paper is structured as follows: In section II, we define the terminology. Section III describes a possible transition from traditional deployment to CD based on the 'stairway to heaven' model [OlAB12]. That section is followed by the explanation of a possible pipeline and the available tools which can be used to support the tasks of each phase. Section V discusses the challenges that is caused by CDE and possible mitigation strategies. Finally, I present my conclusion in section VI.

2 Background

Here, I give an overview of the most important keywords. Those keywords are necessary to understand the content of the seminar paper. When studying the given information about Continuous Software Engineering (CSE), one could clearly see that there are no universally accepted definitions [SCLZ⁺16]. Therefore, the following subsections provide the definitions as they are used in this seminar paper.

2.1 Agile Methodologies

Agile software development is based on "iterative development, where requirements and solutions evolve through collaboration between self-organizing cross-functional teams" [TaKB16]. It encourages adaptive planning, early delivery and continuous improvement. Besides, other characteristics such as flexibility, efficiency, speed, the ability to react to fast changing customer requirements and fluctuating market needs [OlAB12] make agile methodologies so attractive for organizations. As mentioned before, agile methodologies were introduced in the early 2000 [ShBZ17]. So far, many development companies succeeded in implementing agile methodologies. However, agile software development 'only' allows frequent software releases but no continuous releases. The difference becomes clear, when it comes to the comparison of traditional deployment and CD.

2.2 DevOps

"DevOps is a set of practices intended to reduce the time between committing a change to a system and the change being placed into normal production, while ensuring high quality" [BaWZ15]. It is a coined word, that stands for Development (Dev) and Operations (Ops). The main task is bringing together programmers, testers and quality insurance engineers but also IT operations staff [CISA15] to shorten feedback loop. According to [BaWZ15], the DevOps practices can be differentiated in 5 categories:

- Treat Ops as "first-class citizens". This means, the involvement of operations in the development process.
- Dev has to be more responsible for incident handling to shorten the time between error observation and the error fix.
- Include both, Dev and Ops into the deployment process in order to avoid errors caused by buggy deployment.
- Use continuous deployment.
- Use deployment scripts and other infrastructure code. This code is subjected to the same quality control practices than the application code. As a result, deployment error due to misconfiguration can be mitigated.

Especially the fourth category shows the close connection between DevOps practices and continuous practices.

References

- BaWZ15. Len Bass, Ingo Weber und Liming Zhu. *DevOps: A Software Architect's Perspective*. Addison-Wesley Professional. 2015.
- CISA15. Gerry Gerard Claps, Richard Berntsson Svensson und Aybüke Aurum. On the journey to continuous deployment: Technical and social challenges along the way. *Information and Software technology*, Band 57, 2015, S. 21–31.
- OIAB12. Helena Holmström Olsson, Hiva Alahyari und Jan Bosch. Climbing the "Stairway to Heaven"—A Multiple-Case Study Exploring Barriers in the Transition from Agile Development towards Continuous Deployment of Software. In *Software Engineering and Advanced Applications (SEAA), 2012 38th EUROMICRO Conference on*. IEEE, 2012, S. 392–399.
- SCLZ⁺16. Gerald Schermann, Jürgen Cito, Philipp Leitner, Uwe Zdun und Harald Gall. An empirical study on principles and practices of continuous delivery and deployment. *Technischer Bericht*, PeerJ Preprints, 2016.
- ShBZ17. Mojtaba Shahin, Muhammad Ali Babar und Liming Zhu. Continuous Integration, Delivery and Deployment: A Systematic Review on Approaches, Tools, Challenges and Practices. *IEEE Access*, Band 5, 2017, S. 3909–3943.
- TaKB16. Sajjad Taheritajani, Stephan Krusche und Bernd Brügge. A Comparison between Commercial and Open Source Reference Implementations for the Rugby Process Model. *Technischer Bericht*, A University Research Report, 2016.