



Tools & Concepts for Cloud Deployments

Exercise 4: Automating Cloud Deployments

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Overview

In exercises 1-3 we invested massive time to install, configure and manage the mediawiki installation on a Infrastructure as a Service cloud. This exercise dives into concepts of Cloud Computing:

- Cloud computing supports scalable and elastic applications
- Use the essential characteristics, towards “Cattle vs. Pets”
- Terraform let you script your cloud infrastructure
- cloud-init allows automated virtual machine configuration and installation

Lessons

1. Concept of Cloud Computing
2. Terraform and cloud-init on OpenStack

Exercise as PDF

Exercise Solution

- Solution as Markdown
- Solution as PDF

Lesson 1: Concept of Cloud Computing

Before we continue with the practical part of the exercise, we first need to understand the characteristics and the concepts of cloud computing.

Research: Essential Characteristics

According to the *NIST Definition of Cloud Computing* [1] there are several essential characteristics of cloud computing. Read the document, especially focus on the characteristics.

[1] <http://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/Legacy/SP/nistspecialpublication800-145.pdf>

Question: Essential Characteristics

- What are the essential characteristics according to the NIST Definition of Cloud Computing?
- What characteristics and features are needed in order to provide “rapid elasticity”?
- What is the difference between scalability and elasticity?

Research: Pet vs. Cattle

“The History of Pets vs. Cattle” [1] introduces a new understanding of servers and application deployments. Read the blog post to understand the definition and differences of the analogy of a “Pet” server and “Cattle” servers.

[1] <http://cloudscaling.com/blog/cloud-computing/the-history-of-pets-vs-cattle/>

Question: Pet vs. Cattle

- What is the definition of “Pet” servers, what of “Cattle” servers?
- What are the benefits / drawbacks of “Cattle”?
- How are the essential characteristics of Cloud Computing enabling “Cattles”?

Research: Infrastructure and Application Deployment

The cloud stack we used so far looks like the following:

Cloud Stack	Example	Deployment Tool
Application Component	Mediawiki	cloud-init

Cloud Stack	Example	Deployment Tool
Virtual Resource	Instance m1.small	Terraform
Cloud Platform	OpenStack	-

We started on OpenStack as a Cloud Platform, manually created virtual resources (virtual machines of flavor m1.small) and manually installed the mediawiki application inside the virtual machines.

We will now start automating the manual deployment, from bottom to top. The first tool we will use automates the creation of virtual resources on a cloud platform. Please make yourself familiar with the features presented on the product page of Terraform [1]. The second tool will then automate the deployment of mediawiki inside the virtual resources. Please make yourself familiar with the features of cloud-init [2].

[1] <https://www.terraform.io/>

[2] <https://cloudinit.readthedocs.io/en/latest/>

Question: Infrastructure and Application Deployment

- What are the three stages a Terraform script walks through?
- Which cloud platforms are supported by Terraform?
- How can cloud-init be used to deploy an application inside a virtual machine?

Lesson 2: Terraform and cloud-init on OpenStack

Clean up your OpenStack project. *Remove all the virtual machines, the private networking, the router, and the security groups.* We will now create the mediawiki from scratch - automated!

Task: Install Terraform on your workstation

Terraform runs on your workstation. It reads a terraform script from your file system, and then connects to the specified cloud platform to create the infrastructure.

Download [1] and install [2] the newest version (v0.11.11) of Terraform on your workstation. There might be a package for your linux distribution.

[1] <https://www.terraform.io/downloads.html>

[2] <https://www.terraform.io/intro/getting-started/install.html>

Task: Deploy Mediawiki with Terraform

Download and extract the `terraform.zip` file to your workstation, where you installed terraform. The extracted folder will be named `working directory` in the following. It contains several terraform files and bash scripts, which are necessary to deploy mediawiki on OpenStack.

Before you can deploy the mediawiki with terraform, we need to add your personal account to the configuration. In the working directory, edit the file `provider.tf` and set the `user_name`, `tenant_name` and `auth_url` - you can find these values on the OpenStack dashboard at "Project > API Access > View Credentials".

Also in the `provider.tf` file, set the keypair name you previously created in OpenStack. Look up the name of your ssh key pair in OpenStack via Access & Security, Key Pairs.

If you are comfortable with writing your password in the password field, you can start right away. But there's a more secure way for your password (tested with linux bash):

- open a new terminal
- navigate to the working directory
- read in your password into a variable: `read -sr OS_PASSWORD_INPUT`
- export the variable `export OS_PASSWORD=$OS_PASSWORD_INPUT`

Within the same terminal, your password will now be known to applications you start. If you close the terminal, your password will not be stored.

Let's start the mediawiki deployment:

- use the terminal from before
- make sure you are in the working directory

- use `terraform init` to install additional terraform dependencies in your workspace
- use `terraform plan` to see the actions that will happen
- use `terraform apply` to run those actions

Relax. Check the OpenStack dashboard. You should see three virtual machines: loadbalancer, database, mediawiki-1. If you navigate your browser to `http://floating_ip/wiki` you should see a working mediawiki instance.

Task: Extend the Terraform deployment

As you can see, we have only one mediawiki vm, and no monitoring vm. Take the existing Terraform scripts as a starting point and extend. You can use the Terraform docs for OpenStack, if needed [1].

Extend the setup by:

1. Add two more mediawiki vms (3 in total)
2. Add a monitoring vm
3. Add Telegraf to all your vms

With your scaled out deployment you can easily run the stress benchmarks again, to see how the system can handle requests with 3, 4, or even 5 mediawiki vms.

[1] <https://www.terraform.io/docs/providers/openstack/index.html>

Questions: Terraform and cloud-init

- Where can you watch and validate the execution of a cloud-init script?
- How does Terraform help you with scaling elastically?
- Can you imagine how to automatically scale your setup when the load increases/decreases?
- Terraform destroys resources and rebuilds them on changes. E.g. for our Database, where is the right place to store the application state?