



Red Hat Training and Certification

DO467

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Version 1.0

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1. Repositories for this Course	1
1.2. Demo Setup/Preparing to Teach	2
1.2.1. Setup and Prepare Advanced Demo Environment	3
2. Installing Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform	5
2.1. Explaining the Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform Architecture	5
2.1.1. Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform	5
2.1.2. Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform Components	5
2.2. Installing Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub	8
2.2.1. Planning the Installation	8
2.2.1.1. Standalone Automation Controller with a Database on the Same Node	9
2.2.1.2. Standalone Private Automation Hub with a Database on the Same Node	9
2.2.1.3. Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub with External Database Servers...	9
2.2.1.4. Advanced Deployment Scenarios	10
2.2.2. Installation Requirements	10
2.2.2.1. Database Storage	10
2.2.3. Subscription and Support	10
2.2.4. Installing Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform	10
2.2.4.1. Installing Automation Controller	11
2.2.4.2. Installing Private Automation Hub	11
2.2.5. Replacing the CA Certificate	11
2.2.5.1. Gathering Certificates and Private Keys	11
2.2.5.2. Preparing the Systems	11
2.2.5.3. Trusting Custom CA Certificates	11
2.2.6. DEMO: Installing Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub	11
2.3. Initial Configuration of Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub	17
2.3.1. Configuration Overview	17
2.3.2. Making Automation Execution Environments Available from Private Automation Hub ...	17
2.3.2.1. Synchronizing Automation Execution Environments	17
2.3.2.2. Manually Adding Container Images	17
2.3.2.3. Managing Container Repositories, Images, and Tags	17
2.3.3. Synchronizing Ansible Content Collections	17
2.3.3.1. Synchronizing Red Hat Certified Ansible Content Collections	18
2.3.3.2. Synchronizing Ansible Content Collections from Ansible Galaxy	18
2.3.3.3. Manually Adding Ansible Content Collections	18
2.3.4. Testing Basic Automation Controller Functionality	19

2.3.4.1. The Demo Project	19
2.3.4.2. Default Execution Environment Registry Credential	19
2.3.4.3. The Demo Credential	19
2.3.4.4. The Demo Inventory	19
2.3.4.5. The Demo Job Template	19
2.3.5. DEMO: Initial Configuration of Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub	19
3. Managing User Access	21
3.1. Creating and Managing Automation Controller Users	21
3.1.1. Role-based Access Controls	21
3.1.2. Automation Controller Organizations	21
3.1.3. Types of Users	21
3.1.4. Creating Users	21
3.1.5. Editing Users	21
3.1.6. Organization Roles	21
3.1.7. Managing User Organization Roles	22
3.2. Managing Automation Controller Access with Teams	22
3.2.1. Teams in Automation Controller	22
3.2.2. Creating Teams	22
3.2.3. Team Roles	22
3.2.4. Adding Users to a Team and Assigning Team Roles	22
3.2.5. Organization Roles	22
3.2.6. Managing Organization Roles	23
3.3. Creating and Managing Users and Groups for Private Automation Hub	23
3.3.1. User Access	23
3.3.1.1. Creating Groups	23
3.3.1.2. Creating Users	23
3.3.1.3. Creating Groups to Manage Content	23
4. Managing Inventories and Machine Credentials	24
4.1. Creating a Static Inventory	24
4.1.1. Red Hat Ansible Inventory	24
4.1.2. Creating an Inventory Using the Automation Controller Web UI	24
4.1.2.1. Creating a New Inventory	24
4.1.2.2. Creating a Host Group in an Inventory	24
4.1.2.3. Creating Hosts in an Inventory	24
4.1.3. Inventory Roles	25
4.1.3.1. Assigning Roles	25
4.1.4. Inventory Variables	25
4.2. Creating Machine Credentials for Access to Inventory Hosts	25

4.2.1. Storing Secrets in Credentials	25
4.2.2. Credential Types	25
4.2.3. Creating Machine Credentials	26
4.2.4. Editing Machine Credentials	26
4.2.5. Credential Roles	26
4.2.6. Managing Credential Access	26
4.2.7. Common Credential Scenarios	26
5. Managing Projects and Launching Ansible Jobs	27
5.1. Creating a Project for Ansible Playbooks	27
5.1.1. Automation Controller Projects	27
5.1.2. Creating a Project	27
5.1.3. Project Roles	28
5.1.4. Managing Project Access	28
5.1.5. Creating SCM Credentials	28
5.1.6. SCM Credential Roles	28
5.1.7. Managing Access to SCM Credentials	28
5.1.8. Updating Projects	28
5.1.8.1. Update Revision on Launch	29
5.1.8.2. Manual Updates	29
5.1.9. Support for Ansible Content Collections and Roles	29
5.1.10. DEMO: Ansible Automation Controller and Automatic Installation of Collections and Roles	31
5.2. Creating Job Templates and Launching Jobs	32
5.2.1. Job Templates	32
5.2.2. Creating Job Templates	32
5.2.3. Modifying Job Execution	32
5.2.4. Prompting for Job Parameters	32
5.2.5. Job Template Roles	32
5.2.6. Managing Job Template Access	33
5.2.7. Launching Jobs	33
5.2.8. Evaluating the Results of a Job	33
5.2.9. DEMO: Project and Job Template with Prompting for input	33
6. Advanced Job Configuration	34
6.1. Improving Performance with Fact Caching	34
6.1.1. Fact Caching	34
6.1.1.1. Enabling Fact Caching in Automation Controller	34
6.2. Creating Job Template Surveys to Set Variables for Jobs	34
6.2.1. Managing Variables	34

6.2.2. Defining Extra Variables	35
6.2.3. Job Template Surveys	35
6.2.3.1. Managing Answers to Survey Questions	35
6.2.3.2. Creating a Job Template Survey	35
6.3. Scheduling Jobs and Configuring Notifications	35
6.3.1. Scheduling Job Execution	35
6.3.1.1. Temporarily Disabling a Schedule	35
6.3.1.2. Scheduled Management Jobs	35
6.3.2. Reporting Job Execution Results	36
6.3.2.1. Notification Templates	36
6.3.2.2. Creating Notification Templates	36
6.3.2.3. Enabling Job Result Notification	36
7. Constructing Job Workflows	37
7.1. Creating Workflow Job Templates and Launching Workflow Jobs	37
7.1.1. Workflow Job Templates	37
7.1.2. Creating Workflow Job Templates	37
7.1.2.1. Using the Workflow Visualizer	37
7.1.2.2. Adding Multiple Nodes with the Same Relationship	37
7.1.2.3. Creating Convergent Nodes	37
7.1.2.4. Workflow Job Template Surveys	37
7.1.3. Launching Workflow Jobs	37
7.1.3.1. Evaluating Workflow Job Execution	37
7.2. Requiring Approvals in Workflow Jobs	37
7.2.1. Approval Nodes	37
7.2.2. Adding Approval Nodes to Workflows	37
7.2.3. Approving and Denying Workflow Approval Requests	37
7.2.4. Approval Time-outs	37
7.2.5. Approval Notifications	37
8. Managing Advanced Inventories	38
8.1. Importing External Static Inventories	38
8.1.1. Importing Existing Static Inventories	38
8.1.2. Storing an Inventory in a Project	38
8.2. Configuring Dynamic Inventory Plug-ins	38
8.2.1. Dynamic Inventories	38
8.2.2. OpenStack Dynamic Inventories	38
8.2.3. Red Hat Satellite 6 Dynamic Inventories	38
8.3. Filtering Hosts with Smart Inventories	38
8.3.1. Defining Smart Inventories	38

8.3.2. Using Ansible Facts in Smart Inventory Filters	38
8.3.2.1. Creating a Smart Inventory Based on Ansible Facts	38
8.3.3. Other Smart Inventory Filters	38
9. Automating Configuration of Ansible Automation Platform	39
9.1. Configuring Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform with Collections	39
9.1.1. Automating Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform Configuration	39
9.1.2. Getting the Supported Ansible Content Collection	39
9.1.3. Exploring the Supported Ansible Content Collection	39
9.1.3.1. Reading Documentation with Ansible Content Navigator	39
9.1.3.2. Reading Documentation on Automation Hub	39
9.1.4. Examples of Automation with ansible.controller	39
9.1.4.1. Creating Automation Controller Users	39
9.1.4.2. Creating Automation Controller Teams	39
9.1.4.3. Adding Users to Organizations and Teams	39
9.1.5. Community-supported Ansible Content Collections	39
9.2. Automating Configuration Updates with Git Webhooks	39
9.2.1. Introducing Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform Webhooks	39
9.2.1.1. What Are the Benefits of Webhooks	39
9.2.2. Configuring Webhooks	39
9.2.2.1. Configuring a Webhook for a Job Template	39
9.2.2.2. Creating the Webhook for the Repository in GitLab	40
9.2.3. Use Cases for Using Webhooks	40
9.2.3.1. Triggering Different Job Templates Using Branches	40
9.2.3.2. Configuration as Code for Automation Controller	40
9.3. Launching Jobs with the Automation Controller API	40
9.3.1. The Automation Controller REST API	40
9.3.1.1. Using the REST API	40
9.3.1.2. JSON Pagination	40
9.3.1.3. Accessing the REST API From a Graphical Web Browser	40
9.3.2. Launching a Job Template Using the API	40
9.3.3. Launching a Job Using the API from an Ansible Playbook	40
9.3.3.1. Vault Credentials	40
9.3.4. Token-based Authentication	40
10. Maintaining Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform	41
10.1. Performing Basic Troubleshooting of Automation Controller	41
10.1.1. Automation Controller Components	41
10.1.1.1. Starting, Stopping, and Restarting Automation Controller	41
10.1.1.2. Supervisor Components	41

10.1.2. Automation Controller Configuration and Log Files	41
10.1.2.1. Configuration Files	41
10.1.2.2. Log Files	41
10.1.2.3. Other Automation Controller Files	41
10.1.3. Common Troubleshooting Scenarios	41
10.1.3.1. Problems Running Playbooks	41
10.1.3.2. Problems Connecting to Your Host	41
10.1.3.3. Playbooks Do Not Appear in the List of Job Templates	41
10.1.3.4. Playbook Stays in Pending State	41
10.1.3.5. Error: Provided Hosts List Is Empty	41
10.1.4. Performing Command-Line Management	41
10.1.4.1. Changing the Automation Controller Admin Password	41
10.2. Backing Up and Restoring Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform	41
10.2.1. Backing Up Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform	42
10.2.1.1. Backup Procedure	42
10.2.2. Restoring Ansible Automation Platform From Backup	42
10.2.2.1. Restoration Procedure	42
11. Getting Insights into Automation Performance	43
11.1. Gathering Data for Cloud-based Analysis	43
11.1.1. Introducing Red Hat Hybrid Cloud Console Services	43
11.1.2. Collecting Data for Cloud Services	43
11.1.3. Registering Managed Hosts with Insights for Ansible Automation Platform	43
11.1.4. Accessing the Red Hat Hybrid Cloud Console	43
11.2. Getting Insights into Automation Performance	43
11.2.1. Insights for Ansible Automation Platform	43
11.2.2. Generating Remediation Playbooks with Advisor	43
11.2.2.1. Automating Remediation of an Issue for Multiple Systems	43
11.2.2.2. Automating Remediation of Multiple Issues for One System	43
11.2.3. Comparing Systems with Drift	43
11.2.3.1. Finding Differences Between Systems	43
11.2.3.2. Comparing the State of One System at Different Times	43
11.2.3.3. Comparing Systems to a Standard Baseline	43
11.2.4. Sending Alerts Based on Ansible Facts with Policies	43
11.3. Evaluating Performance with Automation Analytics	44
11.3.1. Automation Analytics	44
11.3.2. Reporting Playbook Execution Status	44
11.3.3. Examining Job History	44
11.3.4. Monitoring Notifications	44

11.4. Producing Reports from Automation Analytics	44
11.4.1. Producing Reports from Automation Analytics.....	44
11.4.1.1. Choosing an Appropriate Report.....	44
11.4.1.2. Using Automation Calculator to Compute Savings	44
11.4.1.3. Exporting a Report	44
11.4.2. Predicting the Cost Savings of Automation.....	44
11.4.2.1. Creating a Savings Plan	44
11.4.2.2. Reviewing the Cost Savings Calculations.....	44
12. Building a Large Scale Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform Deployment	45
12.1. Designing a Clustered Ansible Automation Platform Implementation.....	45
12.1.1. Running Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform at Scale	45
12.1.2. Automation Mesh	45
12.1.2.1. Benefits of Automation Mesh	45
12.1.2.2. Types of Nodes on Automation Mesh	45
12.1.2.3. What Are Instance Groups?	46
12.1.3. Planning Network Communication and Firewalls	46
12.1.3.1. Requirements for Control Nodes and Hybrid Nodes	46
12.1.3.2. Requirements for Hop Nodes	46
12.1.3.3. Requirements for Execution Nodes	46
12.1.4. Planning for Automation Mesh	46
12.1.4.1. Providing Resilient Services	46
12.2. Deploying Distributed Execution with Automation Mesh	46
12.2.1. Configuring Automation Mesh	46
12.2.1.1. Creating Instance Groups	46
12.2.1.2. Adding Nodes to the Automation Mesh	46
12.2.1.3. Removing Nodes from the Automation Mesh	46
12.2.2. Visualizing Automation Mesh Topology	46
12.2.3. Automation Mesh Design Patterns	46
12.2.4. Validation Checks	46
12.3. Managing Distributed Execution with Automation Mesh	46
12.3.1. Managing Instance Groups in Automation Controller.....	46
12.3.1.1. Creating Instance Groups	46
12.3.1.2. Assigning Execution Nodes to an Instance Group.....	47
12.3.1.3. Running a Health Check on the Nodes.....	47
12.3.1.4. Disassociating a Node from an Instance Group.....	47
12.3.2. Assigning Default Instance Groups to Inventories and Job Templates	47
12.3.2.1. Configuring an Inventory to Use Instance Groups	47
12.3.2.2. Configure a Job Template to Use Instance Groups	47

12.3.2.3. Running a Job Template with Instance Groups	47
12.3.3. Testing the Resilience of Automation Mesh	47
12.3.3.1. Testing Control Plane Resilience	47
12.3.3.2. Testing Execution Plane Resilience	47
12.3.4. Monitoring Automation Mesh from the Web UI	47
12.3.5. Monitoring Automation Mesh from the Command Line	47
12.3.5.1. Listing Nodes and Instance Groups	47
12.3.5.2. Monitoring Automation Mesh Using the receptorctl Command	47
Appendix A: References and Additional Information	48

1. Introduction

Classroom Machines

Machine name	IP addresses	ROLE
workstation.lab.example.com	172.25.250.9	Graphical workstation used for system administration
servera.lab.example.com	172.25.250.10	Managed server "A"
serverb.lab.example.com	172.25.250.11	Managed server "B"
serverc.lab.example.com	172.25.250.12	Managed server "C"
serverd.lab.example.com	172.25.250.13	Managed server "D"
servere.lab.example.com	172.25.250.14	Managed server "E"
serverf.lab.example.com	172.25.250.15	Managed server "F"
git.lab.example.com	172.25.250.5	GitLab server
hub.lab.example.com	172.25.250.6	Private automation hub server
controller.lab.example.com	172.25.250.7	Automation controller server
control2.lab.example.com	172.25.250.16	Second automation controller
utility.lab.example.com	172.25.250.8	System with utility services required for classroom
db.lab.example.com	172.25.250.20	Database server
exec1.lab.example.com	172.25.250.21	Execution node
exec2.lab.example.com	172.25.250.22	Execution node
exec3.lab.example.com	172.25.250.17	Execution node
hop1.lab.example.com	172.25.250.24	Hop node
bastion.lab.example.com	172.25.250.254	Bridges classroom and student networks

1.1. Repositories for this Course

Main Repository

The DO467 Demo repository contains the PDF of the instructor notes, and various pre-built demos for the chapters. Demos in this repository are meant to setup and configure the environment automatically to provide consistent demos from course-to-course. Each of the various chapter directories contains one or more playbooks for demonstration or for setting up and configuring the environment for running demonstrations from the various **Demo Repositories**,

- **DO467 Demo:** https://github.com/tmichett/DO467_Demo
- **DO467 Notes (Private):** https://github.com/tmichett/DO467_Notes

The DO467 Notes repository contains the AsciiDoc code for the PDF as well as where the examples get developed. Both of these repositories are part of Jenkins workflows. The primary workflow task monitors the **NOTES** repository for changes. Upon changes, a new PDF is built. The PDF, along with the **Demos** directory are then promoted to the **DEMO** repository and published to the **main** branch publicly for everyone to access (including students).

Demo Repositories

These repositories contain demo playbooks that are used as projects in Ansible Controller. They also contain inventory files as well as configuration files needed to run the playbooks locally from workstation for testing.

- **AAP2 Controller Demo:** https://github.com/tmichett/AAP2_Controller_Demo
- **AAP2 Demos:** https://github.com/tmichett/AAP2_Demos

1.2. Demo Setup/Preparing to Teach

The primary demo uses all playbooks to setup an Organizations, Users, Teams, Projects, Credentials, Roles, Job Templates, and finally a Job Workflow Template for approvals.

1. Create Github directory

```
[student@workstation ~]$ mkdir Github ; cd Github
```

2. Clone Repository

```
[student@workstation Github]$ git clone https://github.com/tmichett/DO467_Demo.git
Cloning into 'DO467_Demo'...
remote: Enumerating objects: 339, done.
remote: Counting objects: 100% (339/339), done.
remote: Compressing objects: 100% (251/251), done.
remote: Total 339 (delta 167), reused 198 (delta 31), pack-reused 0
Receiving objects: 100% (339/339), 5.11 MiB | 10.36 MiB/s, done.
Resolving deltas: 100% (167/167), done.
```

3. Change to **D0467_Demo** Directory and the Demo Setup directory

```
[student@workstation Github]$ cd D0467_Demo/Demos/Demo_Setup/
```

4. Update the **vars.yml** file with the Github Personal Access Token (PAT)

```
[student@workstation Demo_Setup]$ vim vars.yml
---
Github_PAT: <Insert-Token-Here> ①
```

① Replace "<Insert-Token-Here>" with your access token

5. Run the **Demo_Prep.sh** script

```
[student@workstation Demo_Setup]$ ./Demo_Prep.sh
```

1.2.1. Setup and Prepare Advanced Demo Environment

1. Change to the Gitlab Directory

```
[student@workstation Demo_Setup]$ cd Gitlab/
```

2. Run the **Setup_Gitlab.sh** script

```
[student@workstation Gitlab]$ ./Setup_Gitlab.sh
*****
***** Clone Repo from Github *****
mkdir: cannot create directory /tmp/Github: File exists
fatal: destination path 'AAP2_Demos' already exists and is not an empty directory.
*****
***** Push Repository to Gitlab *****
*****

Creating Gitlab Project
[sudo] password for student:
```

SUDO and Other Passwords

Depending on the environment and what has been setup, the script is made to allow prompting for passwords. If the **student** user has been configured for sudo without a password, the prompt will not appear.



It may also prompt for the classroom environment Gitlab credentials which are:

- **Username:** student
- **Password:** Student@123

The playbook utilizes some Ansible modules and collections to clone from the public Github repositories mentioned above and create a new project and repository on the Internal classroom environment for testing Gitlab WebHooks.

2. Installing Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform

2.1. Explaining the Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform Architecture

2.1.1. Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform

New version of Ansible Automation.

AAP2.x provides

- Separation of the **Ansible Core** project development and Ansible Modules by introducing content collections
- Execution Environments (leverages containerized execution of playbooks)
 - Ansible Navigator
 - Ansible Builder
- Replaces Ansible Tower with Ansible Automation Controller
- Introduces Ansible Private Automation Hub (container registry and private collection source)

2.1.2. Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform Components

Ansible Core

Minimal implementation of Ansible providing functionality to run Ansible playbooks. Includes the **ansible.builtin** modules.

- **CLI** - Includes the **ansible-playbook**, **ansible-doc**, and the **ansible** ad-hoc commands and utilities
- **Language** - Uses YAML to construct playbooks
- **Framework** - provides platform to extend Ansible by leveraging Content Collections
- **Functions** - Allows use of various logic components such as conditionals, blocks, includes, loops, and other Ansible items.

Ansible Content Collections

Provides rapid growth and expansion for Ansible modules, functions, and filters. Allows only the **ansible.builtin** collection to be part of Ansible Core and separates development of all other collections and their corresponding modules, filters, and other components.



Supportability

Allows a means for vendors to provide certified and supported collections and modules and leverages Ansible Automation Hub as a means of acquiring these collections.

Ansible Content Navigator

New tool being leveraged to develop and test Ansible playbooks. The **ansible-navigator** command leverages Ansible Execution Environments (EEs) to execute playbooks. The EE allows separation of the control node from the environment executing the playbook. In other words, the EE through **ansible-navigator** provides a self-contained execution environment eliminating the need for any of the Ansible Core utilities (ansible-playbook, ansible-inventory, ansible-config) to be locally installed and further increases portability of the tested playbook because EEs can also be used from Ansible Automation Controller.

Automation Execution Environments

An Ansible Execution Environment Image (EEI) contains at a minimum the Ansible Core Package, Ansible Content Collections, any Python libraries, executables, and other dependencies needed to run a given playbook.

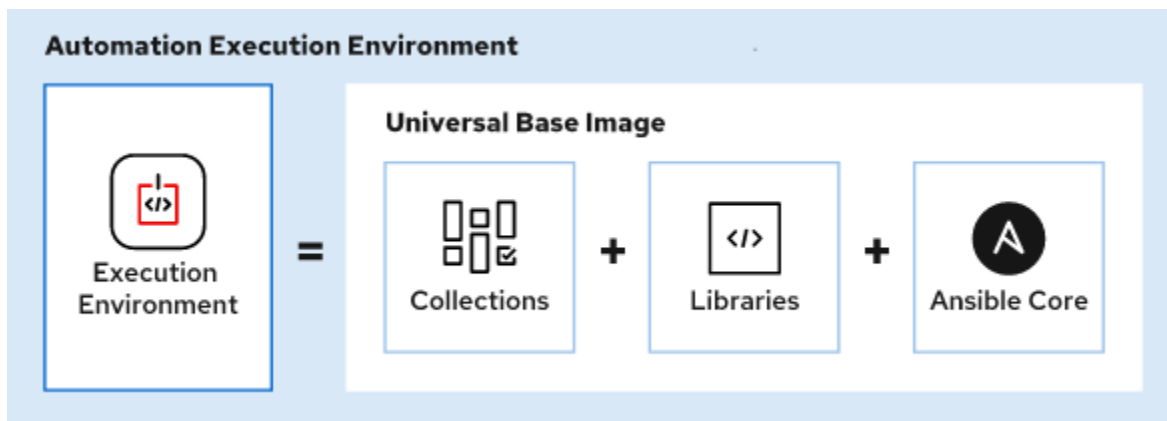


Figure 1. Ansible Execution Environment



Selecting an EEI

The **ansible-navigator** command allows selecting and EEI for executing and running a playbook. When developing playbooks for others to run, or more importantly Automation Controller, once tested, the EEI name will be provided so that future runs for the given playbook will be executed in the same environment ensuring the same outcome.

The EEI can be customized and extended with the Ansible Builder package.

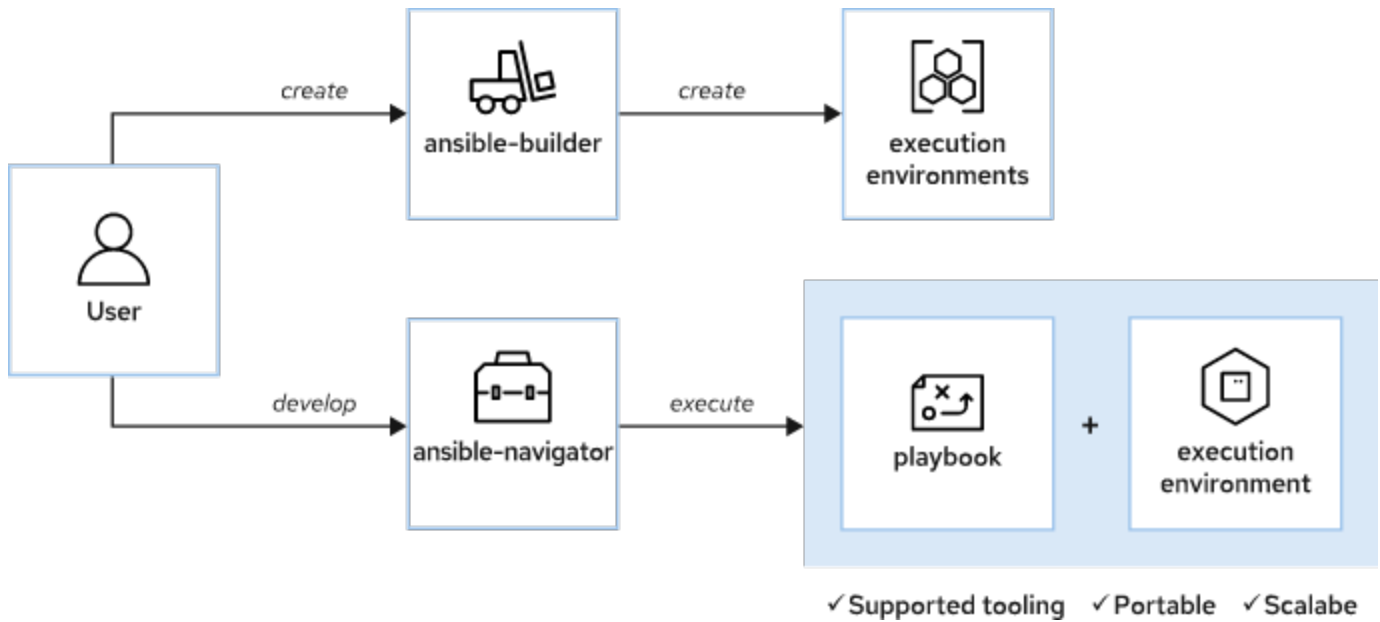


Figure 2. Creating an Ansible Execution Environment

Automation Controller

Replacement for Ansible Tower. Provides a multi-function environment with a RestfulAPI, WebUI, and both control plane and execution planes for enterprise environments. The Automation Controller provides the ability to integrate directly with CI/CD tools and provides a centralized place to manage all Ansible automation tasks.

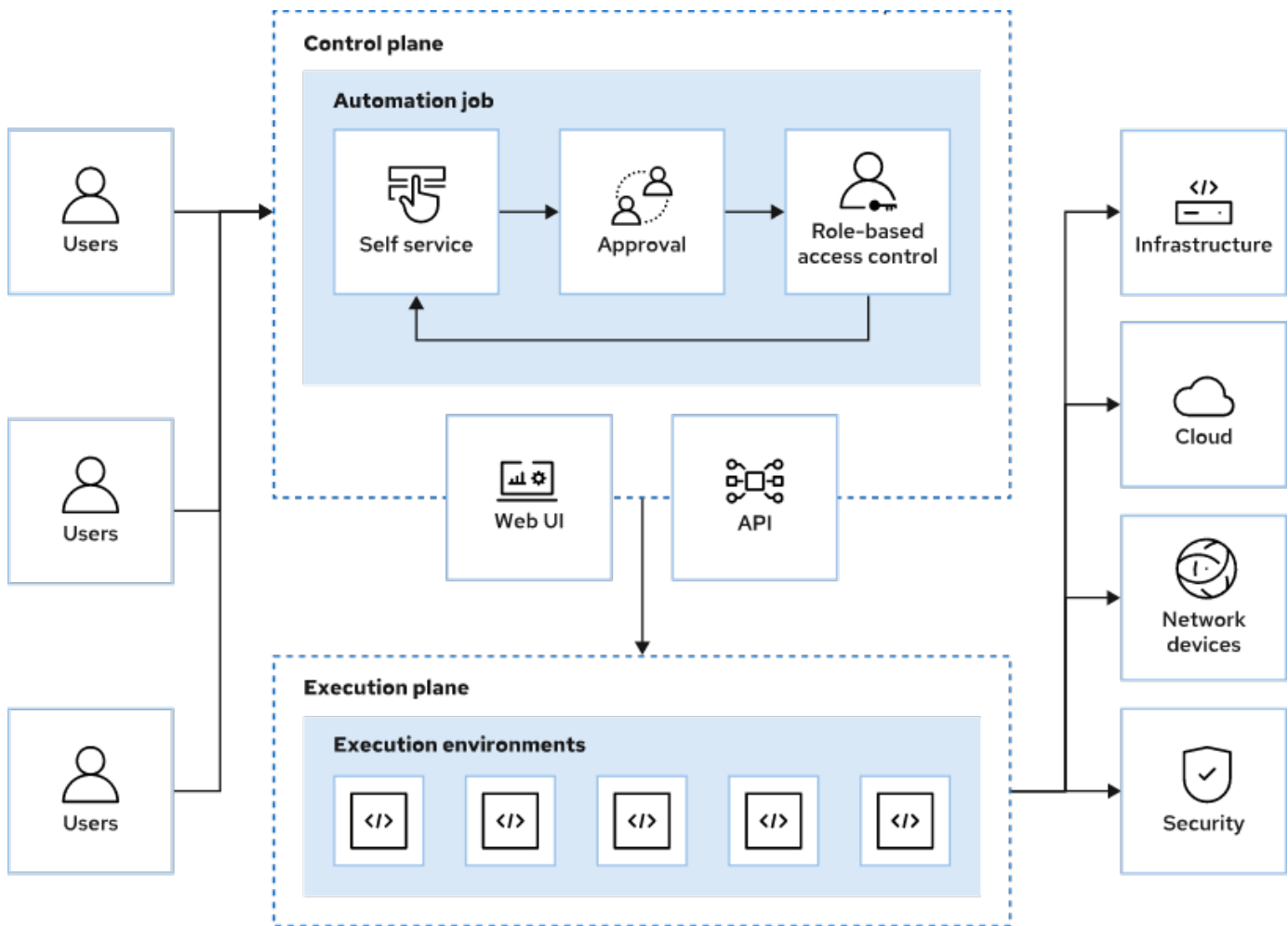


Figure 3. Ansible Automation Controller Components

Automation Hub and Private Automation Hub

Ansible Automation Hub provides a central source to manage Ansible content collections and receive certified and supported collections and modules. The use of Private Automation Hub allows organizations to setup and manage an internal container registry for managing Ansible EEIs as well as storing and managing both certified and home-grown Ansible content collections.

2.2. Installing Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub



Installing Exercise Time

It can take up to 15 minutes for the GE **lab start install-installation** so it is recommended to run this script at the start of the lecture.

2.2.1. Planning the Installation

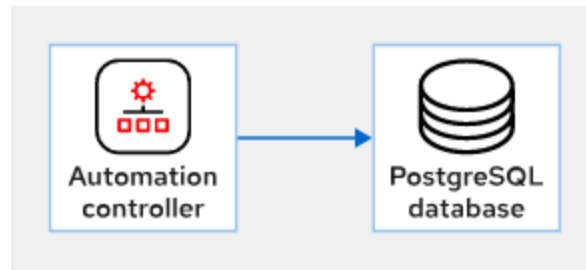


Figure 4. Standalone Automation Controller

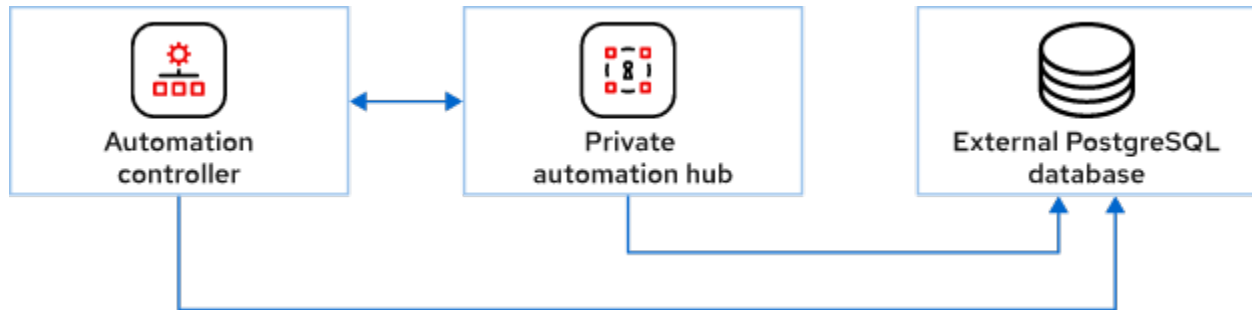


Figure 5. Automation Controller with Private Automation Hub



Automation Mesh Considerations

The Database server must be a separate machine is a requirement for using Ansible Automation Mesh.



Ease of Installation

When installing both Ansible Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub, it is recommended to install both of these items using the same setup command and inventory source. This will allow deployments of both services, but also provides additional benefits with automatic configurations such as creating the "link-style" resources between Controller and Hub like execution environments, and other items such as credentials.



Installation of Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub

In environments having both Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub, it is required that these be installed on separate nodes as they cannot be installed on the same node.

2.2.1.1. Standalone Automation Controller with a Database on the Same Node

2.2.1.2. Standalone Private Automation Hub with a Database on the Same Node

2.2.1.3. Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub with External Database Servers



Classroom and Lab Environment

The deployment for this course will be using both Controller and Hub connected to a shared **External** PostgreSQL database.

2.2.1.4. Advanced Deployment Scenarios

2.2.2. Installation Requirements

Table 1. Hardware Requirements

Machine name	RAM	CPU
Controller	16GB	4 CPUs
Hub	8GB	2 CPUs



Minimum vs. Practical Requirements

The memory and CPU requirements depend really on the size and implementation in the environment. Essentially a good rule of thumb is to have 1GB RAM (memory) for every ten (10) forks and keep at least 2GB for automation controller services. It is also important that with additional forks CPU capacity will also be increased.



Classroom Environment Doesn't Meet Specifications

The classroom environment being utilized doesn't meet the minimum specifications, so during the exercise, the `./setup.sh -e ignore_preflight_errors=true` is run. Specifically, the `-e ignore_preflight_errors=true` instructs the installer to ignore the checks for system requirements. This should not be done in a production environment.

Additionally, for the installation, we are running the setup as **root** since the root user exists on all systems being modified and SSH keys have been pre-distributed.

The classroom environment also uses an internal CA and custom certificates that have been created by the Red Hat Training team. These certificates must be obtained for your environment prior to installation if you want to leverage custom internal CAs.

2.2.2.1. Database Storage

2.2.3. Subscription and Support

2.2.4. Installing Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform

As mentioned above, it is recommended to install both Controller and Hub from the same inventory file using a single **setup.sh** command. In order to successfully install Controller and Hub, the inventory

file must be updated and modified providing credentials and FQDNs in the various section headers.



Extra Resources Added when Installed Together

If installed together, the setup script will create additional controller resources such as hub credentials and perform the configuration automatically as part of the installation/setup process. If done separately, it will be necessary to create the resources in controller manually so that controller can communicate with hub. The other benefit of using a combined installation from the bundled installer is that there are three (3) execution environment images (EIs) included with the bundled installer and these are automatically loaded into hub.

2.2.4.1. Installing Automation Controller

2.2.4.2. Installing Private Automation Hub

2.2.5. Replacing the CA Certificate

2.2.5.1. Gathering Certificates and Private Keys

2.2.5.2. Preparing the Systems

2.2.5.3. Trusting Custom CA Certificates



Installing Exercise Time

It can take up to 15 minutes for the GE **lab start install-installation** so it is recommended to run this script at the start of the lecture.

2.2.6. DEMO: Installing Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub

Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub can both be installed from the **same** machine provided that they are both specified in the inventory file and that the installation user and installation machine has access to all systems specified in the **inventory** file and that the user has the ability to SSH/SUDO without passwords.



Automation Hub and Controller Placement

Ansible Controller and Ansible Private Automation Hub must be installed on separate systems and cannot be installed on the same system.

Example 1. DEMO: Installing Automation Hub and Controller

1. Obtain the bundled installer and untar the file

```
[student@workstation ~]$ tar xvf ansible-automation-platform-setup-bundle-2.2.0-6.1.tar.gz

[student@workstation ~]$ mv ansible-automation-platform-setup-bundle-2.2.0-6.1 AAP2

[student@workstation ~]$ cd AAP2/
```

2. Update the inventory file with the system FQDNs or IP Addresses

Listing 1. Update the Inventory File

```
[student@workstation AAP2]$ vim inventory
```

```
[automationcontroller] ①
controller.lab.example.com

[execution_nodes]

[automationhub] ②
hub.lab.example.com

[automationcatalog]

[database] ③
db.lab.example.com

[all:vars]
admin_password='redhat' ④

pg_host='db.lab.example.com' ⑤
pg_port=5432 ⑥

pg_database='awx'
pg_username='awx'
pg_password='redhat' ⑦

registry_url='hub.lab.example.com' ⑧
```

```
registry_username='admin' ⑨
registry_password='redhat' ⑩

# Automation Hub Configuration ⑪
#

automationhub_admin_password='redhat'

automationhub_pg_host='db.lab.example.com'
automationhub_pg_port=5432

automationhub_pg_database='automationhub'
automationhub_pg_username='automationhub'
automationhub_pg_password='redhat'
automationhub_pg_sslmode='prefer'

# SSL Settings ⑫

custom_ca_cert=/home/student/certs/classroom-ca.pem
web_server_ssl_cert=/home/student/certs/controller.lab.example.com.crt
web_server_ssl_key=/home/student/certs/controller.lab.example.com.key
automationhub_ssl_cert=/home/student/certs/hub.lab.example.com.crt
automationhub_ssl_key=/home/student/certs/hub.lab.example.com.key
postgres_use_ssl=True
postgres_ssl_cert=/home/student/certs/db.lab.example.com.crt
postgres_ssl_key=/home/student/certs/db.lab.example.com.key
```

- ① Specify the Controller Node
- ② Specify the Private Automation Hub Node
- ③ Specify the Database Node
- ④ Specify the **admin** password for Controller
- ⑤ Specify the Database FQDN
- ⑥ Specify the Database Port
- ⑦ Specify the Database Password
- ⑧ URL and Registry for Container Images/Execution Environments
- ⑨ Username for Registry
- ⑩ Password for Registry
- ⑪ Ansible Automation Hub Configuration Settings
- ⑫ SSL Settings



Database

If you are running the database locally and not as a separate installation, you can leave the database section blank and the **pg_host** and **pg_port** blank. This will cause the installer to setup the database locally with the deployed AAP application.



Registry

Setting the registry for **hub.example.com** will allow the installer to link and configure Ansible Automation Hub to Ansible Controller. It will also ensure that the execution environments container in the bundled installer will be loaded properly into Ansible Automation Hub.

SSL

The classroom and lab environment has been configured to run with SSL enabled. In order for the certificates to work properly, the SSL certificates have been supplied in the **/home/student/certs** directory. These certificates must be specified in the **inventory** file. In the default inventory file, the certificates and SSL settings are generally commented out, so it is possible to just place the certificate information at the bottom of the inventory file to prevent searching for each line.



Listing 2. Default SSL Certificate

```
# SSL-related variables

# If set, this will install a custom CA certificate to the system
trust store.
# custom_ca_cert=/home/student/certs/classroom-ca.pem

# Certificate and key to install in nginx for the web UI and API
# web_server_ssl_cert=/path/to/tower.cert
# web_server_ssl_key=/path/to/tower.key
```

3. View final inventory file

```
[student@workstation AAP2]$ grep -Ev "^#|^$" inventory
[automationcontroller]
controller.lab.example.com
[automationcontroller:vars]
peers=execution_nodes
[execution_nodes]
[automationhub]
hub.lab.example.com
[automationcatalog]
[database]
db.lab.example.com
[sso]
[all:vars]
admin_password='redhat'
pg_host='db.lab.example.com'
pg_port=5432
pg_database='awx'
pg_username='awx'
pg_password='redhat'
pg_sslmode='prefer' # set to 'verify-full' for client-side enforced SSL
registry_url='hub.lab.example.com'
registry_username='admin'
registry_password='redhat'
receptor_listener_port=27199
automationhub_admin_password='redhat'
automationhub_pg_host='db.lab.example.com'
automationhub_pg_port=5432
automationhub_pg_database='automationhub'
automationhub_pg_username='automationhub'
automationhub_pg_password='redhat'
automationhub_pg_sslmode='prefer'
automationcatalog_pg_host=''
automationcatalog_pg_port=5432
automationcatalog_pg_database='automationcatalog'
automationcatalog_pg_username='automationcatalog'
automationcatalog_pg_password=''
sso_keystore_password=''
sso_console_admin_password=''
custom_ca_cert=/home/student/certs/classroom-ca.pem
web_server_ssl_cert=/home/student/certs/controller.lab.example.com.crt
web_server_ssl_key=/home/student/certs/controller.lab.example.com.key
automationhub_ssl_cert=/home/student/certs/hub.lab.example.com.crt
automationhub_ssl_key=/home/student/certs/hub.lab.example.com.key
postgres_use_ssl=True
postgres_ssl_cert=/home/student/certs/db.lab.example.com.crt
postgres_ssl_key=/home/student/certs/db.lab.example.com.key
```




Using **grep** to remove comments and blank lines

Listing 3. Source Description

```
grep -Ev "^#|^$" <FILENAME>
```

4. Run the installation **setup.sh** script as the root user with **ignore_preflight_errors=true** as the systems in this course don't meet the minimum hardware requirements.

```
[student@workstation AAP2]$ sudo -i
[sudo] password for student:

[root@workstation ~]# cd ~student/AAP2/

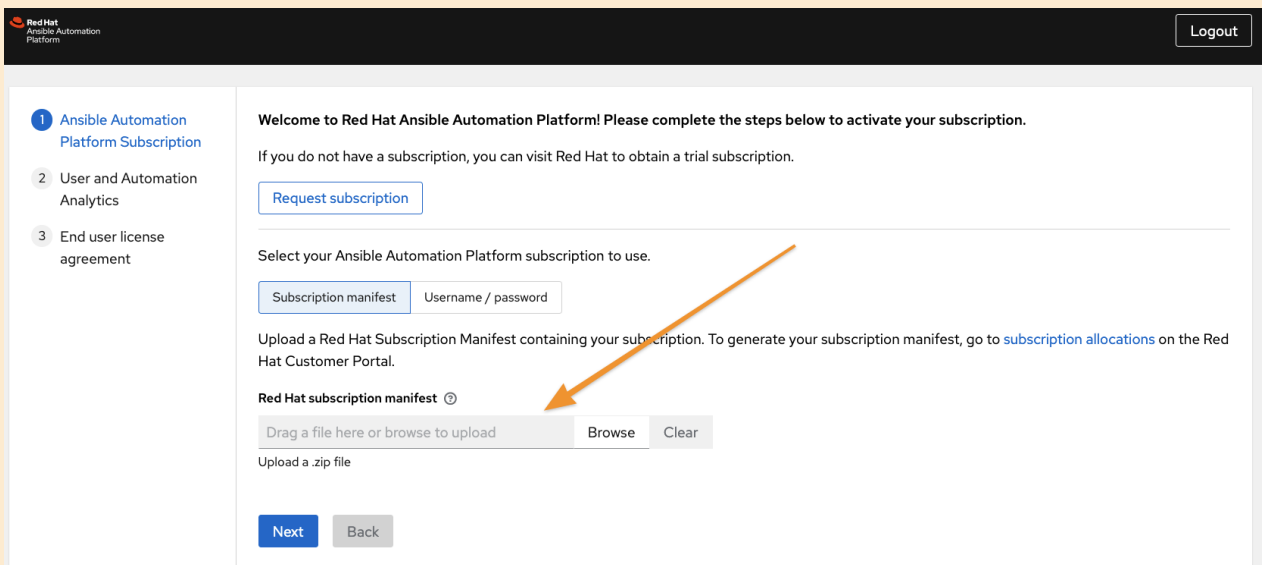
[root@workstation AAP2]# ./setup.sh -e ignore_preflight_errors=true
```



Bundled Software Installer

It is important to at least save the bundled software installer archive **TGZ** file or to save the entire bundled installation directory. In addition, you will also want to save the **Inventory** file that was created so that adding additional components later, performing system backups/restores, and other administrative and maintenance tasks can be performed easily.

5. Install the licenses for Controller by providing the **manifest.zip** file to controller in the WebUI.



The screenshot shows the Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform WebUI. On the left, a sidebar lists three steps: 1. Ansible Automation Platform Subscription (selected), 2. User and Automation Analytics, and 3. End user license agreement. The main content area displays a welcome message and instructions for activating a subscription. It includes a 'Request subscription' button, a section for selecting a subscription manifest and username/password, and an upload area for a 'Red Hat subscription manifest' file. An orange arrow points to the 'Browse' button in the upload area. At the bottom, there are 'Next' and 'Back' buttons.

Figure 6. Ansible Controller License

6. Verify **Automation Hub** is installed

2.3. Initial Configuration of Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub

2.3.1. Configuration Overview

Main benefit of AAP2 is the Controller uses execution environments just like developers have tested with **ansible-navigator** so playbooks can run directly on controller without modification. Initial installation will import the base container images for execution environments, but synchronization and some initial configuration is often necessary for custom environments.

2.3.2. Making Automation Execution Environments Available from Private Automation Hub

Private Automation hub provides a container registry where needed execution environment images (EEIs) can be synchronized and stored. The EEIs can also be uploaded manually to private automation hub as well as collections which we will find out about later.

2.3.2.1. Synchronizing Automation Execution Environments

In most instances, you will want to sync the supported EEIs from <https://registry.redhat.io> and get the latest supported versions for the AAP2 platform.



Synchronizing all EEIs

It is possible to synchronize all remote registries getting all versions from a remote catalog by selecting **Index execution environments** from the vertical dots icon.

2.3.2.2. Manually Adding Container Images

There are multiple ways to copy and inspect container images. The **skopeo** command is probably the best, however it can also be done with **Podman**. The benefit of **Skopeo** is that once you are logged into both the remote container registry and private automation hub, it is possible to use **skopeo copy** directly without needing to first download the container image and set the tags.

2.3.2.3. Managing Container Repositories, Images, and Tags

Management of container images within private automation hub can be done through the WebUI or using the **skopeo** command on the CLI. Images can be easily tagged and displayed here.

2.3.3. Synchronizing Ansible Content Collections

Another key piece of AAP2 is the need for content collections. Many modules that were built-in for Ansible have been moved to content collections (firewalld, podman, and networking components and filters). In order to leverage these modules, collections must be installed and available.

Collection Locations

- **Red Hat Certified (Supported) Content Collections** - <https://console.redhat.com/ansible/automation-hub>
- **Ansible Community (Unsupported) Content Collections provided by Ansible Galaxy** - <https://galaxy.ansible.com>
- **Homegrown/Manual Collections:** Manually uploaded to private automation hub

2.3.3.1. Synchronizing Red Hat Certified Ansible Content Collections

Login and Credentials required for RH Certified Collections

Red Hat Certified Ansible Collections require a multi-step process.



1. Login to Ansible Automation Platform
 - a. Select Collections
 - b. Click "Sync"
2. Create an Authentication Token with the **Connect to Hub**
3. Login to Private Automation Hub
 - a. Collections ⇒ Repository Management and remote tab
 - b. Select **rh-certified** and **Edit** to provide your token.
 - c. Click **Save** and then from Repository Management page, select Sync and it will sync all collections marked as Sync.

2.3.3.2. Synchronizing Ansible Content Collections from Ansible Galaxy



Galaxy Doesn't Require Authentication

Since Ansible Galaxy doesn't require authentication, it is possible to configure a **Community** collection or set of collections by providing a single **requirements.yml** file. This file provides a list of all content collections to synchronize.

2.3.3.3. Manually Adding Ansible Content Collections

In order to manually upload connections, you must first create a **Namespace** in private automation hub.



Collection Security and Signing

The concept of **collection signing** which is signing collection content similar to signing RPMs is currently in Tech Preview for AAP 2.2. This feature is expected to provide an additional level of security with respect to the download content and where it originated from and that it is in its intact and intended format.

2.3.4. Testing Basic Automation Controller Functionality



DEMO Project Benefits

The **Demo** project is essentially there to provide some "smoke" tests allowing a quick way to see if Controller is performing as expected.

2.3.4.1. The Demo Project



Verification of EE and Project Synchronization

The new thing that Controller needs is the ability to use EEIs. The **Demo** project in addition to testing project synchronization components is now able to verify that the EEI can be downloaded and leveraged with Controller.

2.3.4.2. Default Execution Environment Registry Credential



Registry Credential

This is a valid credential and is created based on information at install found in the **inventory** file. This credential cannot be changed from the WebUI and must be modified in the inventory file and have the **setup.sh** script executed again.

2.3.4.3. The Demo Credential



Machine Credential Doesn't Work

This is the only non-working component in the project. The **Machine** credential will need to be updated with a valid username and password or SSH key so that connections can be made to the remote hosts.

2.3.4.4. The Demo Inventory



Modify Inventory to Add Systems

Initially the **Demo** inventory only contains localhost. It should be modified to include one or more hosts from the environment. Ideally, all hosts would be added so that it is possible to verify Controller connectivity to your entire environment.

2.3.4.5. The Demo Job Template

2.3.5. DEMO: Initial Configuration of Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub

*Example 2. DEMO: Initial Configuration of Automation Controller and Private Automation Hub**Working with Execution Environments*

Manually uploading and adding container images (EEs) to Ansible Private Automation Hub.

1. Login to Registries to both Push/Pull and Copy container images

```
[student@workstation Add_EEs]$ skopeo login hub.lab.example.com
```

2. Inspect available containers and tags

```
[student@workstation Add_EEs]$ skopeo inspect docker://hub.lab.example.com/ee-29-rhel8
```

Grabbing Tags and Release Information from the CLI

*Listing 4. **skopeo inspect** to get release and **skopeo tags** to get tags*

```
[student@workstation Add_EEs]$ skopeo inspect
docker://hub.lab.example.com/ee-29-rhel8 --format "{{
.Labels.version }}-{{ .Labels.release }}"
1.0.0-119

[student@workstation Add_EEs]$ skopeo list-tags
docker://hub.lab.example.com/ee-29-rhel8
```



It is also possible to use **podman** to search and list tags, but that is generally considered less reliable. It should also be noted that only **skopeo** has the ability to inspect and act with images remotely. As such, this course will leverage **skopeo** over Podman for many of the exercises.

*Listing 5. **podman** Tag Listing*

```
[student@workstation Add_EEs]$ podman search --list-tags
docker://hub.lab.example.com/ee-29-rhel8
```

*The **skopeo** Command*

Skopeo is another command that can be used with containers and was introduced as part of the **container-tools** suite with RHEL8. The **container-tools** suite installs the RHEL 8 toolchain to work with containers which includes: **podman**, **buildah**, and **skopeo**.

3. Managing User Access

3.1. Creating and Managing Automation Controller Users

3.1.1. Role-based Access Controls

Users assigned roles which grants one or more permissions (RBAC). Roles can be applied to both teams and users and all users in a team will inherit the team's roles.

3.1.2. Automation Controller Organizations

Top-level component in Controller. Organization can have large numbers of users and teams and this is one way to segregate resources such as teams/users/projects into a logical structure to control access.

3.1.3. Types of Users

- **System Administrator:** The built in **superuser** role providing unrestricted access to the entire controller installation. This has **read/write** permissions on all objects in controller regardless of organizations and structure present.
- **System Auditor:** Special **read-only** role with access to everything on the automation controller
- **Normal User:** Standard user with minimal access and no special roles assigned.

3.1.4. Creating Users

Basically done interactively from the WebUI.

Access ⇒ **Users** ⇒ **Add** and then fill in the form.

3.1.5. Editing Users

Access ⇒ **Users** ⇒ **Edit** and then modify values the form.

3.1.6. Organization Roles

Roles within an organization can provide users/teams with additional privileges. Users and teams can be assigned multiple roles to accomplish various tasks and functions.

- **Admin Role:** Provides ability to manage all aspects at the organization level and below. It should be noted that a **System Administrator** automatically inherits an **Admin** role at the organization level.
- **Auditor Role:** Provides read-only access to all aspects at the organization level and below. It should be noted that a **System Auditor** automatically inherits an **Auditor** role at the organization level.
- **Member Role:** Users with this role have **read** access to the organization. There are no special permissions or authorizations given with a member role, so permissions must be assigned to users

or teams in order for users to have permissions on organization objects.

3.1.7. Managing User Organization Roles

Organizations can be created and managed from **Access** ⇒ **Organizations** ⇒ **Access** ⇒ **Add**

:pygments-style: tango :source-highlighter: pygments :toc: :toclevels: 7 :sectnums: :sectnumlevels: 6
:numbered: :chapter-label: :icons: font :icons: font :imagesdir: ./images/

3.2. Managing Automation Controller Access with Teams

3.2.1. Teams in Automation Controller

Teams are groups of users and provide the ability to assign permissions to team members by assigning one or more roles to a team.



Users vs. Teams

It is important to understand that while a user can belong to one or more organization having a variety of different permissions, a **Team** can belong to exactly one organization.

3.2.2. Creating Teams

Access ⇒ **Teams** ⇒ **Add** to create teams.

3.2.3. Team Roles

- **Member Role:** Inherits roles with resources granted to a team
- **Admin Role:** Full control of a team. This role specifically applies to the team, in order to manage other resources as an admin, the **Admin** role must be assigned to the team for a given resources.
- **Read Role:** Provides ability for team members to view resources and team roles.

3.2.4. Adding Users to a Team and Assigning Team Roles

Access ⇒ **Teams** ⇒ **Access** ⇒ **Add** ⇒ **Users** ⇒ **Next** and then complete the form.

3.2.5. Organization Roles

- **Execute**
- **Project Admin**
- **Credential Admin**
- **Workflow Admin**
- **Notification Admin**

- Job Template Admin
- Execution Environment Admin
- Auditor
- Red
- Approve

3.2.6. Managing Organization Roles

Access ⇒ Organizations ⇒ Access ⇒ Add

3.3. Creating and Managing Users and Groups for Private Automation Hub

3.3.1. User Access

Private automation hub allows administrators to setup and manage granular access to content for end-users. This access is based on managing permissions to system objects.



See permission table in book!!



Superusers

Superusers are assigned all permissions regardless of groups or other permissions assigned.

3.3.1.1. Creating Groups

User Access ⇒ Groups ⇒ Create

Edit, select permissions and then save.

3.3.1.2. Creating Users

User Access ⇒ Users ⇒ Create then fill in the form and hit "Save"

3.3.1.3. Creating Groups to Manage Content

4. Managing Inventories and Machine Credentials

4.1. Creating a Static Inventory

4.1.1. Red Hat Ansible Inventory

When leveraging Ansible at the CLI, the inventory is generally specified by one or more inventory files/scripts and defined within the **ansible.cfg** file. These are known as managed hosts. When using Ansible Automation Controller, inventory can be specified within the WebUI or inventories can be provided as part of projects for static files (for example Git repository) or generated dynamically from an external source.

4.1.2. Creating an Inventory Using the Automation Controller Web UI

Licensing Concerns

It is extremely important to remember that Ansible Automation Controller is a licensed and supported project. Each unique entry in an inventory file consumes a single license. So naming conventions for hosts (especially when using Dynamic Inventory) must be considered when developing and constructing inventories.

Listing 6. Inventory



```
servera
servera.lab.example.com
172.25.250.10
```

The above inventory all refer to the same system but referenced in different ways: Hostname, FQDN, and IP address. Since each of these is a unique entry, this inventory file would consume three (3) entitlements instead of just a single entitlement. Therefore, it is important to note how inventories are created and license entitlements are managed.

4.1.2.1. Creating a New Inventory

Resources ⇒ Inventories ⇒ Add ⇒ Add Inventory

4.1.2.2. Creating a Host Group in an Inventory

4.1.2.3. Creating Hosts in an Inventory

4.1.3. Inventory Roles

- Admin
- Update
- Ad Hoc
- Use
- Read

4.1.3.1. Assigning Roles

Resources ⇒ **Inventories** ⇒ **Access** ⇒ **Add**

Assign users/teams to an inventory and assign one ore more roles, then click "Save"

4.1.4. Inventory Variables

It is possible from the inventory screen to provide **inventory** variables which would apply to all systems within the inventory. It is possible to provide group-based or host-based variables to inventory as well by selecting the hosts or host groups.



Automation Mesh and Instance Groups

The **Instance Groups** is primarily used for Automation Mesh.

4.2. Creating Machine Credentials for Access to Inventory Hosts

4.2.1. Storing Secrets in Credentials

Ansible automation controller objects can store secrets such as passwords, SSH keys and other credentials. It is also possible to store vault credentials which can then decrypt files from projects.



Encryption and Decryption

Once secrets or sensitive information has been entered into the WebUI and encrypted, it can no longer be retrieved in decrypted form through the WebUI.

4.2.2. Credential Types

- Ansible Galaxy/Automation Hub API Token
- Container Registry
- Github Personal Access Token
- Machine

- **Network**
- **Source Control**
- **Vault**



Note on Source Control and PAT

In order to use standard source control Github/Gitlab without SSH keys, it is possible to still use the Username/Password. However, you must create a Personal Access Token (PAT) to be used and this will be done with the **Source Control** credential type and not the **Github Personal Access Token**.

4.2.3. Creating Machine Credentials

Resources ⇒ **Credentials** ⇒ **Add** and complete the form.

4.2.4. Editing Machine Credentials

4.2.5. Credential Roles

- **Admin**
- **Use**
- **Read**

4.2.6. Managing Credential Access

Resources ⇒ **Credentials** ⇒ **Access** and then add users/teams with one or more roles.

4.2.7. Common Credential Scenarios

Credentials Protected by Controller (Not known to Users)

- SSH and Machine Keys
- Sudo keys

Credential Prompts for Sensitive Password, Not Stored in Automation Controller

- Prompts user for passwords at job launch because don't want credentials stored on the controller (Based on compliance or other regulations)

5. Managing Projects and Launching Ansible Jobs

5.1. Creating a Project for Ansible Playbooks

5.1.1. Automation Controller Projects

Generally backed by a source control repository (Git) and contains at least one playbook. It is possible for Ansible Controller to automatically download resources and project materials specified by the **requirements.yml** when the job template using the project template is launched.

Automatically Installing Collections and Roles

The automated installation of roles/collections depends on the **roles** or **collections** directory containing a **requirements.yml** file. It further requires that these sub-directories be at the top level of the source control project. Meaning they cannot be nested down within other sub-directories in the project.

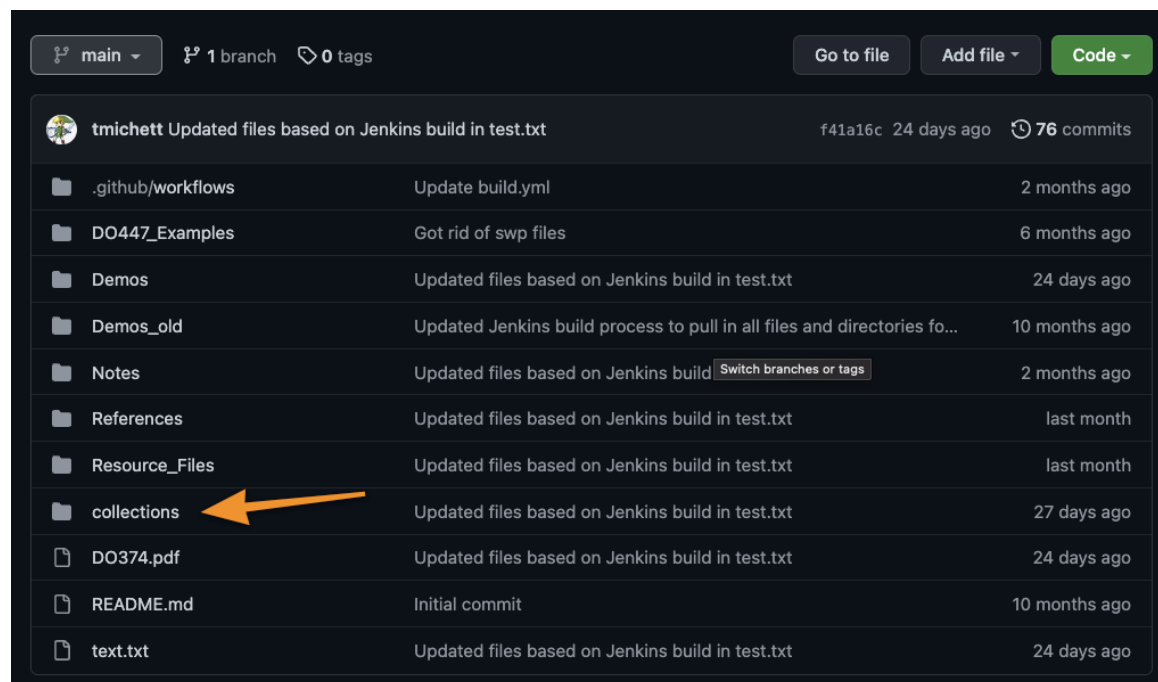


Figure 7. Source Control Project with Collections directory

5.1.2. Creating a Project

Resources ⇒ Projects ⇒ Add ⇒ Create New Project

Complete all the entries and select source control location.



Credentials must exist

The source control credentials must be created in advance of creating a project.

5.1.3. Project Roles

- **Admin**
- **Use**
- **Update**
- **Read**

5.1.4. Managing Project Access

Resources ⇒ **Projects** ⇒ **(name of project)** ⇒ **Access** ⇒ **Add**

Add the users/teams to the project and select one or more roles.

5.1.5. Creating SCM Credentials

Resources ⇒ **Credentials** ⇒ **Add** and complete the form on the new credentials page.

5.1.6. SCM Credential Roles

- **Admin**
- **Use**
- **Read**

5.1.7. Managing Access to SCM Credentials

Resources ⇒ **Credentials** ⇒ **(credential name)** ⇒ **Access** ⇒ **Add**

Add the users/teams to the credential and select one or more roles.

5.1.8. Updating Projects

SCM projects require copies of playbooks and other version control objects to be replicated locally and stored in Controller. Based on this functionality, it must be determined how project assets get updated.

Clean

Removes any local modifications before pulling latest SCM revision.

Delete

Deletes local copy of repository and clones down a the repository from the remote system.

Allow Branch Override

Allows using items from other branches in the source control.

5.1.8.1. Update Revision on Launch

Ensures that each time project is used source control is updated before any other actions take place.

5.1.8.2. Manual Updates

Project source versions can be updated manually or custom workflow nodes can be created when Advanced Job Workflows are made.

5.1.9. Support for Ansible Content Collections and Roles

Ansible Content Collections can be installed automatically at runtime by Controller providing that ...

- There is a **collections/requirements.yml** file present in the project
- Ansible controller has access to the collection source

Ansible Automation Controller Projects

When projects are created they are located in the **/var/lib/awx/projects** directory. Controller also downloads collections and roles based on the **requirements.yml** file and these can be viewed by SSHing as the **awx** user to Controller and looking in the **__awx_cache** location.

Listing 7. Connection to Controller

```
[student@workstation ~]$ ssh awx@controller
```



Listing 8. AWX Directory

```
[awx@controller ~]$ pwd
/var/lib/awx

[awx@controller ~]$ ls -alF
total 8
drwxr-xr-x. 11 awx  awx  179 Aug 29 15:21 ./
drwxr-xr-x. 53 root root 4096 Aug 29 15:20 ../
drwx-----. 3 awx  awx   17 Jun 14 11:42 .ansible/
drwx-----. 4 awx  awx   35 Jun 14 11:47 .config/
drwxr-x---. 2 awx  awx    6 May 18 17:21 job_status/
drwx-----. 3 awx  awx   19 Jun 14 11:47 .local/
drwxr-x---. 4 awx  awx   91 Aug 29 16:07 projects/
drwxr-xr-x. 3 root awx   20 Jun 14 11:41 public/
drwxr-xr-x. 3 awx  awx   40 Aug 29 15:21 rsyslog/
drwx-----. 2 awx  awx    6 Jun 14 11:41 .ssh/
-rw-r--r--. 1 root root    5 Jun 14 11:44 .tower_version
srw-rw----. 1 awx  awx    0 Aug 29 15:21 uwsgi.stats=
drwxr-xr-x. 3 root root   17 Jun 14 11:40 venv/
```

Listing 9. AWX Projects

```
[awx@controller ~]$ cd projects/

[awx@controller projects]$ ls -alF
total 0
drwxr-x---. 4 awx awx  91 Aug 29 16:07 ./
drwxr-xr-x. 11 awx awx 179 Aug 29 15:21 ../
drwxr-xr-x. 5 awx awx 166 Aug 29 16:07 _8__do467_demo_project/
-rwxr-xr-x. 1 awx awx   0 Aug 29 16:07 _8__do467_demo_project.lock*
drwxr-xr-x. 3 awx awx  36 Aug 29 16:07 __awx_cache/

[awx@controller projects]$ cd __awx_cache/
```

Listing 10. AWX Projects and Collections

```
[awx@controller 14]$ cd
/var/lib/awx/projects/__awx_cache/_13__ch4_do467_demo_project/14

[awx@controller 14]$ ls requirements_collections/ansible_collections/
ansible ansible.posix-1.4.0.info tmichett tmichett.gls_collection_demo-
1.0.4.info
```

The Organization **MUST** have the **Galaxy Credentials** Configured

In order to "enable" the automatic synchronization of collections and roles, the organization must be configured to allow this. At the Organization-level, it needs to have one or more credentials selected for **Galaxy Credentials**. The **Ansible Galaxy** credential is created by default at install. Depending on how Ansible Private Automation Hub was installed, there may also be some credentials created for using collections stored there.



Organizations > Red Hat Training

Edit Details

Name * Red Hat Training	Description Red Hat Training Organization - Demo	Max Hosts ⓘ 0
Instance Groups ⓘ Q	Execution Environment ⓘ Q	Galaxy Credentials Q Ansible Galaxy x

Save Cancel

Figure 8. Organization Galaxy Credentials

If projects have **requirements.yml** files and **Galaxy Credentials** have not been defined, the following error will occur on Project sync.

```
5:32
ok: [localhost] => {
  "msg": "Collection and role syncing disabled. Check the AWX_ROLES_ENABLED and AWX_COLLECTIONS_ENABLED settings and Galaxy credentials on the project's organization.\n"
}
```

Figure 9. Galaxy Credentials - Sync Error

5.1.10. DEMO: Ansible Automation Controller and Automatic Installation of Collections and Roles

Automation Controller can install roles and collections automatically from a **requirements.yml** file.



Automatic Installation of Collections/Roles

The **collections** and **roles** directory must exist at the top-layer of the project. The contents of this directory will contain a **requirements.yml** file with the collections or roles that need to be installed for the project to work. These directories cannot be nested anywhere else within the project.

Example 3. DEMO: Installing Automation Hub and Controller

5.2. Creating Job Templates and Launching Jobs

5.2.1. Job Templates

Job templates are predefined settings that are used to launch jobs for running a playbook. A job template allows customization of how a playbook will be run from a given project. Job templates provide all parameters for the execution of a playbook including:

- inventory
- credentials
- execution environment
- variables
- ansible parameters (fork, etc)

This allows jobs to be easily run, scheduled, and maintained.

5.2.2. Creating Job Templates

Resources ⇒ **Templates** ⇒ **Add** ⇒ **Add job template**

*Things to Remember*

Be aware of template naming and how job templates are named. Also, it is extremely important to select an **Execution Environment** so that you know which environment will be executing your playbook.

5.2.3. Modifying Job Execution

5.2.4. Prompting for Job Parameters

When any of the prompt on launch parameters are set, this will create interactive prompts for the user executing the **Job Template** or if set at here will also propagate to the **Job Template Workflow**.

5.2.5. Job Template Roles

- **Admin**
- **Execute**
- **Read**

5.2.6. Managing Job Template Access

Resources ⇒ Templates ⇒ (Job Template Name) ⇒ Access ⇒ Add

Select users/teams and then select one or more roles to add.

5.2.7. Launching Jobs

*Resources ⇒ Templates ⇒ (Job Template Name - Launch Template)

5.2.8. Evaluating the Results of a Job

5.2.9. DEMO: Project and Job Template with Prompting for input.

Automation Controller Job Templates can prompt for input such as special variables. This example will show a generic playbook running that installs a webserver, but doesn't create any content. It then uses the **site2.yml** file with a **variable_host** variable that can control where and how the playbook runs.

Example 4. DEMO: Creating a Job Template

6. Advanced Job Configuration

6.1. Improving Performance with Fact Caching

6.1.1. Fact Caching

Unless specifically disabled in the playbook or the Job Template, controller will automatically run the **setup** module to gather facts as the first task just like the **ansible-playbook** command. When optimizing playbooks, it is common to disable gather facts at the playbook level for the play. However, facts are often very useful. It is possible to use **Fact Caching** to obtain facts from the setup module and cache within Ansible Controller.

6.1.1.1. Enabling Fact Caching in Automation Controller

Fact Cache settings are global at the Automation Controller level and are set from **Settings** ⇒ **Jobs** and then editing the **Per-Host Ansible Fact Cache Timeout**.

Gathering and Caching Facts

If all playbooks and jobs have been optimized and have Fact Gathering disabled, it is possible to create a simple job from a playbook setup to just gather facts. The playbook doesn't even require tasks.



Listing 11. Fact Gathering

```
---
- name: Collect or Refresh Fact Cache
  hosts: all
  gather_facts: true
...
```

It is important to note that fact caching must be enabled. To enable fact caching **Resources** ⇒ **Templates** ⇒ **(Job Template Name)** ⇒ **Edit Template** then select **Enable Fact Storage**. :pygments-style: tango :source-highlighter: pygments :toc: :toclevels: 7 :sectnums: :sectnumlevels: 6 :numbered: :chapter-label: :icons: font :icons: font :imagesdir: ./images/

6.2. Creating Job Template Surveys to Set Variables for Jobs

6.2.1. Managing Variables

Job templates can prompt for defining extra variables. However, one thing about this is that the **variable_name** must be known so that you can correctly specify the variable and its value.



vars_prompt in Playbooks

The **vars_prompt** playbook directive for interactively specifying variables doesn't work in controller as there is no way to interactively set variables via this means. Instead, you must use the **prompt on launch** or Job template surveys.

6.2.2. Defining Extra Variables



Relaunching Job Templates

When defining the variables with the **Prompt on launch** and then re-running the same job, the same variables and values are used. In order to change the variables or values, a new job must be launched from the Job Template.

6.2.3. Job Template Surveys

Job Template Surveys are available to ask users to specify values for given variables. This eliminates the need for the person to know anything about the playbook, or the variables used in the playbook and also can provide some additional assistance and input validation for variables.

6.2.3.1. Managing Answers to Survey Questions

6.2.3.2. Creating a Job Template Survey

Resources ⇒ **Templates** ⇒ **(Job Template Name)** ⇒ **Survey** ⇒ **Add** and then fill in the form.

```
:pygments-style: tango :source-highlighter: pygments :toc: :toclevels: 7 :sectnums: :sectnumlevels: 6
:numbered: :chapter-label: :icons: font :icons: font :imagesdir: ./images/
```

6.3. Scheduling Jobs and Configuring Notifications

6.3.1. Scheduling Job Execution

Resources ⇒ **Templates** ⇒ **(Job Template Name)** ⇒ **Schedules** ⇒ **Add** to add the job template schedule.



Scheduling Reminder

Allows launching of Job Templates based on a schedule. Keep in mind, if a template or workflow requires input from a user, then it cannot be scheduled.

6.3.1.1. Temporarily Disabling a Schedule

Schedules can be enabled and disabled from the **Schedules** page.

6.3.1.2. Scheduled Management Jobs

6.3.2. Reporting Job Execution Results

In addition to scheduling, Controller has the ability to provide notifications based on various notification templates.

6.3.2.1. Notification Templates

Notifications can be created for the following:

- Job Start
- Job Success/Failure
- Approvals

6.3.2.2. Creating Notification Templates

Administration ⇒ **Notifications** ⇒ **Add**

6.3.2.3. Enabling Job Result Notification

Resources ⇒ **Templates** ⇒ **(Job Template Name)** ⇒ **Notifications** :pygments-style: tango :source-highlighter: pygments :toc: :toclevels: 7 :sectnums: :sectnumlevels: 6 :numbered: :chapter-label: :icons: font :icons: font :imagesdir: ./images/

7. Constructing Job Workflows

7.1. Creating Workflow Job Templates and Launching Workflow Jobs

Section Info Here

7.1.1. Workflow Job Templates

7.1.2. Creating Workflow Job Templates

7.1.2.1. Using the Workflow Visualizer

7.1.2.2. Adding Multiple Nodes with the Same Relationship

7.1.2.3. Creating Convergent Nodes

7.1.2.4. Workflow Job Template Surveys

7.1.3. Launching Workflow Jobs

7.1.3.1. Evaluating Workflow Job Execution

7.2. Requiring Approvals in Workflow Jobs

Section Info Here

7.2.1. Approval Nodes

7.2.2. Adding Approval Nodes to Workflows

7.2.3. Approving and Denying Workflow Approval Requests

7.2.4. Approval Time-outs

7.2.5. Approval Notifications

8. Managing Advanced Inventories

8.1. Importing External Static Inventories

Section Info Here

8.1.1. Importing Existing Static Inventories

8.1.2. Storing an Inventory in a Project

8.2. Configuring Dynamic Inventory Plug-ins

Section Info Here

8.2.1. Dynamic Inventories

8.2.2. OpenStack Dynamic Inventories

8.2.3. Red Hat Satellite 6 Dynamic Inventories

8.3. Filtering Hosts with Smart Inventories

Section Info Here

8.3.1. Defining Smart Inventories

8.3.2. Using Ansible Facts in Smart Inventory Filters

8.3.2.1. Creating a Smart Inventory Based on Ansible Facts

8.3.3. Other Smart Inventory Filters

9. Automating Configuration of Ansible Automation Platform

9.1. Configuring Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform with Collections

Section Info Here

9.1.1. Automating Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform Configuration

9.1.2. Getting the Supported Ansible Content Collection

9.1.3. Exploring the Supported Ansible Content Collection

9.1.3.1. Reading Documentation with Ansible Content Navigator

9.1.3.2. Reading Documentation on Automation Hub

9.1.4. Examples of Automation with `ansible.controller`

9.1.4.1. Creating Automation Controller Users

9.1.4.2. Creating Automation Controller Teams

9.1.4.3. Adding Users to Organizations and Teams

9.1.5. Community-supported Ansible Content Collections

9.2. Automating Configuration Updates with Git Webhooks

Section Info Here

9.2.1. Introducing Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform Webhooks

9.2.1.1. What Are the Benefits of Webhooks

9.2.2. Configuring Webhooks

9.2.2.1. Configuring a Webhook for a Job Template

9.2.2.2. Creating the Webhook for the Repository in GitLab

9.2.3. Use Cases for Using Webhooks

9.2.3.1. Triggering Different Job Templates Using Branches

9.2.3.2. Configuration as Code for Automation Controller

9.3. Launching Jobs with the Automation Controller API

Section Info Here

9.3.1. The Automation Controller REST API

9.3.1.1. Using the REST API

9.3.1.2. JSON Pagination

9.3.1.3. Accessing the REST API From a Graphical Web Browser

9.3.2. Launching a Job Template Using the API

9.3.3. Launching a Job Using the API from an Ansible Playbook

9.3.3.1. Vault Credentials

9.3.4. Token-based Authentication

10. Maintaining Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform

10.1. Performing Basic Troubleshooting of Automation Controller

Section Info Here

10.1.1. Automation Controller Components

10.1.1.1. Starting, Stopping, and Restarting Automation Controller

10.1.1.2. Supervisord Components

10.1.2. Automation Controller Configuration and Log Files

10.1.2.1. Configuration Files

10.1.2.2. Log Files

10.1.2.3. Other Automation Controller Files

10.1.3. Common Troubleshooting Scenarios

10.1.3.1. Problems Running Playbooks

10.1.3.2. Problems Connecting to Your Host

10.1.3.3. Playbooks Do Not Appear in the List of Job Templates

10.1.3.4. Playbook Stays in Pending State

10.1.3.5. Error: Provided Hosts List Is Empty

10.1.4. Performing Command-Line Management

10.1.4.1. Changing the Automation Controller Admin Password

10.2. Backing Up and Restoring Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform

Section Info Here

10.2.1. Backing Up Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform

10.2.1.1. Backup Procedure

10.2.2. Restoring Ansible Automation Platform From Backup

10.2.2.1. Restoration Procedure

11. Getting Insights into Automation Performance

11.1. Gathering Data for Cloud-based Analysis

Section Info Here

11.1.1. Introducing Red Hat Hybrid Cloud Console Services

11.1.2. Collecting Data for Cloud Services

11.1.3. Registering Managed Hosts with Insights for Ansible Automation Platform

11.1.4. Accessing the Red Hat Hybrid Cloud Console

11.2. Getting Insights into Automation Performance

Section Info Here

11.2.1. Insights for Ansible Automation Platform

11.2.2. Generating Remediation Playbooks with Advisor

11.2.2.1. Automating Remediation of an Issue for Multiple Systems

11.2.2.2. Automating Remediation of Multiple Issues for One System

11.2.3. Comparing Systems with Drift

11.2.3.1. Finding Differences Between Systems

11.2.3.2. Comparing the State of One System at Different Times

11.2.3.3. Comparing Systems to a Standard Baseline

11.2.4. Sending Alerts Based on Ansible Facts with Policies

11.3. Evaluating Performance with Automation Analytics

Section Info Here

11.3.1. Automation Analytics

11.3.2. Reporting Playbook Execution Status

11.3.3. Examining Job History

11.3.4. Monitoring Notifications

11.4. Producing Reports from Automation Analytics

Section Info Here

11.4.1. Producing Reports from Automation Analytics

11.4.1.1. Choosing an Appropriate Report

11.4.1.2. Using Automation Calculator to Compute Savings

11.4.1.3. Exporting a Report

11.4.2. Predicting the Cost Savings of Automation

11.4.2.1. Creating a Savings Plan

11.4.2.2. Reviewing the Cost Savings Calculations

12. Building a Large Scale Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform Deployment

12.1. Designing a Clustered Ansible Automation Platform Implementation

12.1.1. Running Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform at Scale

The new architecture and design of AAP2 allows running Ansible automation on a larger scale. Automation controller provides the ability to configure two separate modes by separating the API/Control nodes from the Execution nodes. This separation allows execution nodes to be placed closer to managed hosts.



Automation Mesh

Automation mesh and new automation architecture replaces less powerful isolated nodes.

12.1.2. Automation Mesh

Provides overlay network to distribute work from machines running the controller and instead directs it to dedicated and dispersed execution nodes.

12.1.2.1. Benefits of Automation Mesh

- Provides ability to scale both control and execution capacity.
- Uses end-to-end encrypted and authenticated network protocols.
- Provides multiple direction and multiple hop network allowing communication across constrained networks.
- Allows reconfiguring how traffic is routed across the mesh if one or more nodes fail.
- Reduces overhead providing a single distributed platform

12.1.2.2. Types of Nodes on Automation Mesh

- **Control Plane** Runs controller services, webUI, task dispatcher, project updates and management jobs.
 - **Hybrid nodes** - Performs both control plane and execution plane tasks
 - **Control Nodes** - Performs only control plane tasks and does not perform any execution plane tasks
- **Execution Plane** Executes functions on behalf of the control planes.

- **Execution nodes:** Run jobs using container-based execution environments (uses **ansible-runner**)
- **Hop nodes:** Node to route traffic to other execution nodes.

12.1.2.3. What Are Instance Groups?

12.1.3. Planning Network Communication and Firewalls

12.1.3.1. Requirements for Control Nodes and Hybrid Nodes

12.1.3.2. Requirements for Hop Nodes

12.1.3.3. Requirements for Execution Nodes

12.1.4. Planning for Automation Mesh

12.1.4.1. Providing Resilient Services

12.2. Deploying Distributed Execution with Automation Mesh

12.2.1. Configuring Automation Mesh

12.2.1.1. Creating Instance Groups

12.2.1.2. Adding Nodes to the Automation Mesh

12.2.1.3. Removing Nodes from the Automation Mesh

12.2.2. Visualizing Automation Mesh Topology

12.2.3. Automation Mesh Design Patterns

12.2.4. Validation Checks

12.3. Managing Distributed Execution with Automation Mesh

12.3.1. Managing Instance Groups in Automation Controller

12.3.1.1. Creating Instance Groups

12.3.1.2. Assigning Execution Nodes to an Instance Group

12.3.1.3. Running a Health Check on the Nodes

12.3.1.4. Disassociating a Node from an Instance Group

12.3.2. Assigning Default Instance Groups to Inventories and Job Templates

12.3.2.1. Configuring an Inventory to Use Instance Groups

12.3.2.2. Configure a Job Template to Use Instance Groups

12.3.2.3. Running a Job Template with Instance Groups

12.3.3. Testing the Resilience of Automation Mesh

12.3.3.1. Testing Control Plane Resilience

12.3.3.2. Testing Execution Plane Resilience

12.3.4. Monitoring Automation Mesh from the Web UI

12.3.5. Monitoring Automation Mesh from the Command Line

12.3.5.1. Listing Nodes and Instance Groups

12.3.5.2. Monitoring Automation Mesh Using the `receptorctl` Command

Appendix A: References and Additional Information

Ansible Docs/Tips and Tricks

- **Installing Software and other Packages:** https://ansible-tips-and-tricks.readthedocs.io/en/latest/os-dependent-tasks/installing_packages/
- **Ansible Tips and Tricks (Examples):** <https://github.com/nfaction/ansible-tips-and-tricks/wiki>
- **Ansible Product Demos:** <https://github.com/ansible/product-demos>
- **Ansible Workshops:** <https://github.com/ansible/workshops/tree/devel/provisioner>
- **Red Hat CoP - Automation Good Practices:**
 - <https://redhat-cop.github.io/automation-good-practices/>
 - <https://github.com/redhat-cop/automation-good-practices/>
- **Ansible Controller Collection:** <https://console.redhat.com/ansible/automation-hub/repo/published/ansible/controller/docs?keywords=>

Ansible KB Articles and Solutions

- **How Do I Perform Security Patching / OS Package Upgrades On Ansible Tower/Automation Controller Nodes Without Breaking Any Ansible Tower/Automation Controller Functionality ?:** <https://access.redhat.com/solutions/4566711>

Ansible Filters and Collections

- **Using filters to manipulate data (Jinja2 Templating):** https://docs.ansible.com/ansible/latest/user_guide/playbooks_filters.html
- **Community General:** <https://docs.ansible.com/ansible/latest/collections/community/general/index.html>

Ansible Blogs and Articles

- **When localhost isn't what it seems in Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform 2:** <https://www.ansible.com/blog/when-localhost-isnt-what-it-seems-in-red-hat-ansible-automation-platform-2>

Ansible Execution Environments

- **Execution Environments:** https://docs.ansible.com/automation-controller/4.2.0/html/userguide/execution_environments.html#ee-mount-options